

Hafa Adai!

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The 18th CNMI State Board of Education hold a regular meeting yesterday morning, during which members unanimously elected then-BOE vice chair Antonio L. Borja, fourth from left, as its new chairman. Vice chair is SGM (ret.) Herman Atalig, back, second from right, and the secretary/treasurer is Gregory P. Borja, third from right. Also present is member Andrew L. Orsini, far right, Maisee B. Tenorio, center, private school representative Dr. Ron Snyder, next to Tenorio, and teacher representative, Dr. Dora B. Miura, far left.



BOE finally meets quorum; Antonio Borja elected chair

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

After three tries, the 18th CNMI State Board of Education was finally able to muster a quorum yesterday morning for a regular meeting at their office on Capitol Hill, setting the stage for the unanimous election of then-BOE vice chair Antonio L. Borja as the new chairman.

See BOE on Page 4



NMI health facilities to get ACS equipment

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
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REPORTER

With the shutdown of the Alternative Care Site at Kanoa Resort, what happens now to the federally funded equipment that were procured for the site? No worries, says the Commonwealth Health-



care Corp., as the equipment are currently being used at the Commonwealth Health Center and will also be distributed soon to both the Rota and Tinian health centers.

According to Warren Villagomez, director for Public Health Emergency Preparedness, all the equipment that were procured for the ACS have been transferred to CHC, with some of the equipment replacing outdated ones at the health center.

See ACS on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Folks now have a new place to enjoy the arts with this month's opening of Fundemic Arts.

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OFF THE WALL

Researchers are searching for clues about Beethoven's health problems and hearing loss.

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LIFE & STYLE

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Local

VOX POPULI: Thoughts on Covenant Day

our leaders.

—Merlene Pelisamen
Tanapag

As a citizen of the NMI, Covenant Day to me is a day of liberation. I'm very grateful that I'm born a U.S. citizen. Without this citizenship, it would be pretty difficult to travel and go to other places where you would normally just walk through as a U.S. citizen. I thank God everyday that our ancestors and the United States made this pact, because without it life would be much harder. Because of the sacrifices and hardships our ancestors endured to get this treaty, we the younger generation get to reap the blessings from it. Not only I am proud to celebrate 46 years since this Covenant was made but I also believe that it will be one that lasts. Thank you, God bless and happy Covenant Day!

—Faith Pua
—Currently residing in Honolulu, Hawaii

Covenant Day is when the CNMI became part of the United States. ...What Covenant Day means to me is that we are privileged as the people of CNMI to have a U.S. citizenship and have a voice in our government and

What I know about Covenant Day is when the CNMI agreed to become a U.S. territory and now residents of the CNMI hold citizenship under the United States and it's become a holiday where we can celebrate. The significance of this holiday is we became a commonwealth, which allowed us to create our own constitution as a semi-sovereign nation. Personally, I feel thankful because having this relationship with the United States gives us protection, helps whenever a calamity hits us. For instance, when typhoon Yutu hit our islands, the United States sent its military and financial aid to help rebuild our island.

—Marryleen Aldan
Dandan

Covenant Day is a holiday that commemorates the union made between the U.S. and Northern Marianas Islands. Covenant Day marks an important event in the CNMI's rich history. Covenant Day to

me means I get to remind myself once again of the privilege I have of living here in the CNMI, where I get to enjoy the benefits of their established relationship with the U.S.

—Alayssa Mondido
Koblerville

I am so grateful that our islands chose Covenant with the U.S. Today, we reap the benefits of being a commonwealth of a country that protects our rights. That means a lot for me, as a U.S. citizen, and for my children's future.

—Baybie Mongkeya
Koblerville

I can tell you that Covenant Day is a special day for many people in the CNMI. Covenant Day is a time for the people of the CNMI to reflect on their history and celebrate their culture and identity. For others, it can often be seen as a time of renewal, reflection, and re-dedication to one's faith, community, or personal goals.

—Alexander Limes
Chalan Kanoa

Covenant Day is a day
See VOX on Page 4



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Norita is hopeful gov't is solvent, will pay major debts

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Based on her new projection of CNMI revenues for the next six months of fiscal year 2023, acting Finance secretary Tracy B. Norita is more hopeful that the government is solvent and will be able to pay its major debts or that those will be satisfied.

"We are mindful that there are geopolitical activities that might affect our projections," Norita said, which is why it is important for the Department of Finance to continue monitoring the inflow of revenue.

Norita discussed the revenue projections, among other issues, yesterday during the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Governmental Investigations' confirmation hearing for her nomination to serve as Finance secretary.

"And I do hope that it stays online and that we are able to meet our obligations, especially the big ones such as the Settlement Fund, our [Group Health and Life Insurance], our payrolls," she said.

The acting Finance secretary said they have a fiscal response team to monitor the revenues closely moving forward and make sure that they stay on track.

"I am confident in our financial analysis of the prior collection trends. However, when you look at projections, you are looking forward, so we have to be mindful of the other things that are happening that might impact that," said Norita in response to EAGI Committee vice chair Sen. Donald M. Manglona's question.

On her nomination, Norita

said she is honored to have given this tremendous responsibility and task to be the Finance secretary if confirmed by the Senate. "Finance is my passion, mainly because it can be a creative space to help design the implementation of community programs and projects," she said.

Norita said her experience in government finance since 2014 has been a wonderful one, starting at the Office of Management and Budget, and then moving over to Revenue and Taxation, working alongside "positive, hardworking, competent, and committed individuals."

Upon her confirmation, Norita said her four-year strategic plan will include restoring the credibility and integrity of the finance processes. "We are the gatekeepers of the CNMI's funds and hold responsibility to ensure those funds are accounted for and properly managed," she said.

The acting secretary said she envisions a department that is transparent, being able to produce financial report in a timely manner so that the information is useful and meaningful.

Other plan is prioritizing the completion of the CNMI's single audit on time and making progress with resolving audit findings' implementation of corrective action plans.

Norita said she will focus on building capacity for Finance

personnel. "Our work starts with the people and they need the support," she said. Norita said training has been the No. 1 request from many of her staff.

She said she will work closely with each division di-

rector to develop a training plan that addresses key functions within their divisions to ensure capacity building but also continuity and efficiency.

Norita said staff engagement is not addressed enough

and that she plans to make that part of the foundation of the department.

Lastly, she said, she will work hard to guide the Palacios-Apatang administration in making sound financial decisions through controlled spending, increase tax en-

forcement, and full use and compliance with federal financial assistance.

Many government officials, including Tinian and Aguijan Mayor Edwin P. Aldan, and other members in the community testified in support of Norita's nomination.

USCIS updates policy for naturalization based on military service

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services announced yesterday updated policy guidance in the USCIS Policy Manual to clarify and conform with the revision of Form N-426, Request for Certification of Military or Naval Service.

The updated policy guidance provides that only appli-

cants filing for naturalization based on military service (INA 328 or 329) who are currently serving in the U.S. armed forces are required to file Form N-426 with their naturalization application.

Former service members applying for naturalization under INA 328 or 329 are no

longer required to file Form N-426 with their naturalization application, but they must submit a photocopy of their Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty (DD Form 214), National Guard Report of Separation and Record of Service (NGB Form 22), or other official discharge

document for all periods of service that provides information on the type of separation and character of service.

This guidance is effective immediately, and applies to all currently pending applications as well as to applications filed on or after March 22, 2023. (PR)

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King-Nabors wants strict bail conditions for criminal cases

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_deletorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Karl R. King-Nabors (R-Tinian) has introduced a bill that would require stricter conditions for making bail and improved enforcement of bail conditions in criminal cases.

This comes soon after King-Nabors noted an increase in the number of cases in which criminal defendants with prior convictions and a history of violence have been released on bail without proper supervision or who have committed violations of

the conditions of release, without any substantial consequences.

King-Nabors' bill also defines the eligibility of a defendant for a preliminary hearing while released on bail.

Under Senate Bill 23-35, the senator cited a recent example of a convicted felon who had served time in prison, was on probation and had violated the conditions of his probation by committing two separate felony offenses, but was still released on bail.



King-Nabors

Saipan, Rota, and Tinian."

As for the other equipment that are not being used at this time, Villagomez said they are safely stored in a climate-controlled space so they can be well kept for future use.

He assures the CNMI community that all the money invested into the ACS will not go to waste as the equipment will still be utilized, but now for different needs.

"All the investments that were made to the ACS did not go to waste. It will go back to our community as [the equipment] will be utilized by those in our community at a different level of healthcare," he said.

This has been the idea since the planning stage of the ACS, he said.

"That was the whole idea. When we were planning this response out with CEO Muña, we did think that it was going to be very costly, but

While out on bail, the convicted felon then committed a violent crime, evaded arrest, kidnapped a girlfriend, obtained a firearm from a Department of Corrections officer, and repeatedly fired the weapon at officers.

The senator said this resulted in the convicted felon's own death and the death of his girlfriend.

King-Nabors said these criminal defendants present an increased danger to the community and have failed to comply with

we also made sure that the procurement of the equipment that would be utilized at the ACS would be maximized and capitalized at our Commonwealth healthcare facility. This was all part of the planning process and the buildup of the ACS facility," Villagomez stated.

If the pandemic taught CHC anything, it's that it can never be too prepared in terms of the kind of healthcare equipment it has access to, he said.

"Nothing will go to waste; nothing will be left unused. We will put all these equipment to good use and to the use of our community. The pandemic showed us that we can never be too prepared and that we will be faced with different challenges that would require access to these kinds of equipment and supplies," he said.

portant to our community," she said.

Fortunately, Babauta said, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) has introduced legislation to postpone the touchback rule by a few months and SHRM NMI Chapter fully supports that.

"Doing away with or modifying the touchback provision of the U.S. Workforce Act will be of tremendous benefit to the CNMI in this regard. NMI SHRM gives our thanks and appreciation for all of the things that U.S. Delegate Sablan has accomplished for the CNMI community," she said.

Acting Labor secretary Leila Staffler says the CNMI Department of Labor is well aware of this impending exodus of workers and, as a means to prepare for what seems like an inevitable loss, the department is looking at ways to connect unemployed CNMI locals to jobs through different kinds of community outreach as well as streamlining its website for a more efficient way for members of the community to find job vacancies.

"The absence of so many workers at the same time, to include both professionals and support workers, in key industries such as healthcare, utilities, telecommunications, and hospitality will have a tremendously adverse effect on business and government operations, especially at a time when we anticipate that our economy will be reviving," Babauta added.

In hopes of filling the gap that will be left by this exodus, SHRM members have been making efforts to employ local workers to fill key positions. Unfortunately, there just aren't enough local workers, she said.

"SHRM member businesses have been and are making sincere efforts to find and employ local workers. However, there are not sufficient local resident workers to fill certain healthcare, professional and semi-skilled-trades worker positions. Efforts are being made to correct this situation, including with the help of Northern Marianas College and [NMTech], but presently the CW-1 workers in these fields are vitally im-

portant to our community," she said.

Fortunately, Babauta said, Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) has introduced legislation to postpone the touchback rule by a few months and SHRM NMI Chapter fully supports that.

With no functioning BOE in January, February, and the beginning of March, Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada had to use his authority to make decisions on behalf

the reasonable restrictions placed on them by the courts.

He said these amendments to the Commonwealth Code relating to bail proceedings provide for more consistent application of conditions of release and consequences for violation of those conditions that better protect the public and victims of crime.

The senator said there has been ambiguity in the law as to when a

defendant is entitled to a preliminary hearing. He noted that Rule 5.1 of the Rules of Criminal Procedure provides that a defendant is entitled to a preliminary hearing if the defendant is "substantially deprived" of liberty, without explicitly defining "substantially deprive." Court cases have been inconsistent in application of any definition, King-Nabors said.

of the board for the benefit of PSS.

When asked what issues the BOE was supposed to discuss during the first board meeting that triggered the quorum issue, he said Orsini made a motion to go into an executive or closed-door session for personal matters, but Gregory, Antonio, and Tenorio voted against it, while Orsini and Atalig voted yes.

"The reason why I voted no on the executive session is because that should be a public forum. Other than that, I'm not sure what we're going to tackle until we get into executive session today. I know that everyone has been reading the papers and having their own assumptions and watching the news, so those are not concrete until after the executive session, which I cannot talk about at all," said Borja.

Besides Antonio L. Borja, the new BOE officers are SGM (ret.) Herman Atalig, who was elected vice chairman, and Gregory P. Borja, who was elected secretary/treasurer. The other BOE members present yesterday morning were Andrew L. Orsini and Maisie B. Tenorio.

The BOE is the rule-making body

that oversees and implements policies that govern the Public School System. It failed to meet the quorum requirement during meetings last Feb. 1, 14, and 24 so the meetings did not push through.

During a break in yesterday's meeting, Antonio L. Borja told *Saipan Tribune*, "I'm glad that we were able to come together and have a quorum. We've really needed this since January. ... My hope is to get the board to be more proactive than reactive with issues. Of course, we're going to have issues coming up that we're not probably going to see, but we're going to try to foresee them—so I'm glad we're back together."

As for the meeting itself, he said they're trying to work things out.

"So far, so good," he said. "We want to be proactive and I want to make sure, as chair, that our students and teachers are not forgotten in this whole process. It's our fiduciary duty to make sure we uphold our oath to PSS."

With no functioning BOE in January, February, and the beginning of March, Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada had to use his authority to make decisions on behalf

in 1976, a great union was birthed. Without it, we may have never gotten the opportunity to experience the freedoms that we have today. On a personal level, it makes me proud to be American. Many think of "Americans" as those 6'4" white men from Minnesota. We may not be a part of the continental United States but, because of Covenant Day, we have flying over our land those sacred Stars and Stripes with our latte stone and mwár. CNMI Covenant Day makes me a proud Islander American.

—Jeremiah Fernandez
San Antonio

ACS

From Page 1

"All of those equipment that were at the ACS were all transferred over to CHCC and some of them will also be used at the Rota and Tinian health centers. That equipment is being stored at CHCC under the leadership of CHCC CEO Esther Muña," he said.

For example, 95% of the mostly unused beds installed at the ACS have been used to replace the beds at CHC, he said. Similarly, the air conditioning systems used at the ACS have replaced the ones at CHC.

He said the ultraviolet equipment at the ACS have been taken down and are being safeguarded "and they're going to be utilized by our healthcare facilities on

TOUCHBACK

From Page 1

force entities in the CNMI believe this would have an adverse impact on both businesses and government operations.

According to Nicole Babauta, president of the Society for Human Resource Management NMI Chapter, the loss would have a tremendous adverse impact because foreign workers holding CNMI Only Transitional workers visas—usually referred to as CW-1 visas—make up a large chunk of CNMI's workforce, particularly since the CNMI is still in the process of recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our continuing concern is with the 'touchback' provision of the U.S. Workforce Act, a 'minimum 30-day departure' from the Commonwealth, which will require thousands of workers and their families to leave the CNMI around the June 18 to October 1, 2023 time frame, for possibly up to six-eight months," she said.

AGGREKO

From Page 1

the contract expires.

He pointed out that the new power engine for CUC's Power Plant 1 in Lower Base will take several more months to install and, if they still need Aggreko to ensure there is enough power for Saipan's use, then they will have to extend that contract again so they will have sufficient

power supply capacity.

CUC's power purchase agreement with Aggreko entails the supply of 12 megawatts of supplementary power as CUC undergoes major engine replacement and maintenance. The PPA contract started in 2019, with CUC paying Aggreko a fixed monthly cost of \$302,400, according to the transition report for CUC.

The original contract with Aggreko was to provide temporary

power for 90 days while CUC's generator engines are being overhauled and repaired. That contract was first extended in January 2020 for another 90 days, then extended several times more.

On average, Saipan reportedly needs 33MW of power supply. The peak load is 37MW. Presently, CUC's power plants are restricted to 36MW, with 8MW of reserve and this includes 12MW of power provided by Aggreko.

VOX

From Page 2

where we should remember what we have agreed to with the U.S. and see all the good that has come out of it. And we should celebrate the good outcome of it.

—Juana Somol
Kagman

Covenant Day is a day that established the relationship of the Marianas Islands and the United States of America. From that very moment

Babauta: CNMI has nearly same number of cops as Guam



Babauta



Bermudes

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan) expressed concern yesterday that the CNMI has almost the same number of police officers as Guam, even though the latter is four times bigger in population.

Babauta said that Guam has a population of 170,534 and has 267 uniformed officers, while the CNMI population is roughly 43,400, yet has 194 uniformed officers.

Babauta raised the issue about the size of the Department of Public Safety's police force during the Senate Committee on Executive Appointments and Government Investigations' confirmation hearing on the appointment of Clement R. Bermudes for the position of DPS commissioner.

» Overwhelming support for Bermudes as DPS chief

Babauta, who chairs the EAGI Committee, asked Bermudes to look at those numbers because she finds it "staggering" that, for a population of just 43,400, the CNMI has nearly 200 officers and the neighboring island of Guam, whose population is roughly four times more, is about equal in terms of ratio.

"And that's very concerning to me," she said.

The senator said that when a desk audit was conducted at DPS, many of the officers were still assigned to COVID-19 duties, so the audit could not get an accurate picture.

"What we tried to find out from that desk audit is, does DPS have enough officers in the right position and the right jobs? Or are there too many police officers?" Babauta said.

In for Babauta's questions about the probe into 28 officers who are being accused of incurring illegal overtime, Bermudes said that DPS Internal Affairs is conducting the investigation, in coordination with the Office of the Attorney General. Bermudes said majority of the allegations concerns overtime and potential fraud in relation to overtime. The 28 officers have been placed on administrative duty.

Bermudes said the public

will be given an update once they complete the probe, whether it is exoneration or prosecution.

Citing the new transition report on DPS, Babauta said there have been allegations of corruption raised against police officers and a hostile working environment at DPS, but when Babauta asked Bermudes if he finds this to be true, Bermudes replied that he does not see it.

"Whether they are putting the show because I'm around, I don't get that feeling," he said.

But if there is a hostile working environment, Bermudes said it is his responsibility to resolve and to ensure that it does not exist. "Because that's unnecessary energy we're devoting for something when somebody is a culprit," he said.

Bermudes also disclosed that his priority is the frontline—patrol and traffic. "Because if we can prevent crime, that would be lesser investigation," he said.

At the confirmation hearing, several police and government officials and other members in the community came to support Bermudes' nomination.

Bermudes said he is truly honored that the Palacios-Appatang administration believes he can help rebuild trust in the Commonwealth. "I am further honored to return to the department where I started my public service over 30 years ago," he added.

The acting commissioner said he is encouraged by the younger generation of officers and civilians who are part of the journey to rebuild the department.

"In closing let's START. Start is the acronym for Service, Trust, Accountability, Respect and Transparency. Our people deserve better. And this is what I commit to our people from this day forward," Bermudes said.

Bermudes is a retired U.S. Army lieutenant colonel. He used to be dean of the Northern Marianas College Academic Program and Services, and chair of NMC's Criminal Justice Department.

Happy COMMONWEALTH COVENANT Day to all.

Let us come together on this Commonwealth Covenant Day to celebrate our diverse community and common heritage.

★★★★★

Ramon "RB" Jose Blas Camacho
Mayor of Saipan and Staff

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Remembering Zorro: A friend to the CNMI

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
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CORRESPONDENT

Yesterday, March 23, marked one year since the loss of a friend and advocate of the CNMI, Yasuo Miyazawa, whom many lovingly remembered as "Zorro."

Several of Miyazawa's friends around the globe, including those here in the CNMI, took time to remember, and pay tribute to the founder of the Kokusai Gakuen Educational Institute, which established close ties with the CNMI for close to 35



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

File photo shared by Frances Mary Sablan shows three generations of the Sablan family posing with Yasuo Miyazawa, center, during the Seisa Gakuen Ski & Cultural Exchange in Yokohama, Japan.

years, and created the Participate and Learn cultural and sports exchange program between his school and Marianas High School, and later the Francisco M. Sablan Elementary School.

It was in 1987 when Miyazawa, alongside the late MHS teacher, Bert Thompson, started the PAL program. Since then, students from Japan and Saipan have been building a "friendship bridge," learning cultural appreciation and awareness through sports and cultural activities, with well over 7,000 Japanese students coming to learn CNMI culture and history, and hundreds of students from here broadening their international experiences, learning the culture and history of Japan, making friends, and learning to adjust to different climates.

In 2011, the CNMI Legislature acknowledged Miyazawa's effort to foster international peace and goodwill and presented him with a House resolution.

Because of Miyazawa's enthusiasm and investment in education and cross-pollinating cultural knowledge through international education for nearly three decades, many friendships were built, and both students and teachers in the CNMI hold memories from their experiences through being involved in the program. Many of those who knew Miyazawa personally remember him as "Zorro"—both a personal friend and a friend of the CNMI.

Former MHS vice principal Frances Mary Sablan said she always looked forward every year for over three decades to the annual cultural and sports exchanges between Seisa Gakuen and Marianas High School, and later with the Francisco M. Sablan Elementary School, not just as a school administrator and cultural exchange chaperone of Marianas High School, but also as a lifelong friend.

"We miss you, my friend! Thank you for your love, friendship, hospitality and fond memories," Sablan added.

James W. Feger, who is the founder and president of World Organized Rocball/Rocball and an MHS teacher Marianas High School, said that Miyazawa established the annual Sport and Cultural Exchange Program with students from the Seisa Gakuen High School of Yokohama, Japan and Marianas High School in 1985.

He also credits Miyazawa as the first to introduce Rocball—which he describes as Saipan's own sport—to the international community.

DIVISION OF COASTAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

P. O. Box 501304, Saipan MP 96950 | Gualo Rai Center, Saipan
Tel. No. 664-8300 FAX NO. 664-8315
www.dcrm.gov.mp



NOTICE OF APPLICATION

As of March 24, 2023

THE FOLLOWING IS A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF COASTAL PERMIT APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY THE DCRM OFFICE:

| APPLICANT | DATE APPLICATION RECEIVED | APPLICATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION | LOCATION | TYPE | STATUS |
|---|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Sakura CNMI Corporation dba Sakura Marine Sports | 12/29/2022 CRM-MD2022-0005 | Temporary Beach Concession | Garapan, Saipan | Minor Development | ON HOLD* |
| 2. Asia Pacific, Inc. dba Asia Marine Sports | 02/09/2022 CRM-MD2023-0011 | Temporary Beach Concession | Garapan, Saipan | Minor Development | ON HOLD* |
| 3. Tinian Mayor's Office | 2/23/2023 TSm-2023-001 | Wooden deck with concrete posts | San Jose, Tinian | Shoreline | Under Review* |
| 4. Hong Ye Rental & Construction Services, LTD. | 2/27/2023 TPIm-2023-002 | Demolition and Clearing | San Jose, Tinian | Ports & Industrial | Approved* 3/22/2023 |
| 5. C Pacific Corporation dba Two Seasons Resort Suites | 2/28/2023 APC2023-0025 | Main Pool, Kids Pool, 2 Wooden Decks, Koi Pond, Landscaping, Driveway & Cistern Tank | Kannat Tabla, Saipan | Wetland | Under Review* |
| 6. Terracotta Hotel Six Holdings, LLC. | 3/7/2023 CRM-MS2023-0004 | Transfer of Interest/Renovation of Hotel One | Garapan, Saipan | Major Siting | Application Review* |
| 7. Tinian Shipping Services, LLC. | 3/7/2023 CRM-MD2023-0016 | Dry Dock | Lower Base, Saipan | Minor Development | Approved* 3/9/2023 |
| 8. Department of Public Lands (DPL) | 3/7/2023 APC2023-0026 | Secondary Vegetation Clearing (Makaka Beach) | Garapan, Saipan | Shoreline | Approved* 3/15/2023 |
| 9. Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) | 3/10/2023 CRM-MD2023-0017 | 24th Annual Taste of the Marianas | Garapan, Saipan | Minor Development | Approved* 3/20/2023 |
| 10. Northern Marianas College (NMC) | 3/10/2023 CRM-MS2023-0005 | New Construction of Student Center Building | As Terlaje, Saipan | Major Siting | Application Review* |
| 11. Department of Public Works (DPW) | 3/10/2023 CRM-MS2023-0006 | Sugar Dock Reconstruction & Dredging Project | Chalan Kanoa, Saipan | Major Siting | Application Review* |
| 12. Office of the Mayor, Municipality of Saipan | 3/10/2023 CRM-MD2023-0020 | Tree Trimming & Maintenance | Garapan, Saipan | Minor Development | Under Review* |
| 13. Heshun Corporation New Seaside Restaurant | 3/17/2023 CRM-MD2023-0018 | Re-Pavement of Parking Lot & Driveway (After-the-Fact) | Garapan, Saipan | Minor Development | Under Review* |
| 14. Primtek Construction | 3/20/2023 CRM-MD2023-0019 | Lower Base Staging Area | Lower Base, Saipan | Minor Development | Under Review* |
| 15. Smart Star, Inc. dba Blue Bay Diving Club | 3/22/2023 APC2023-0027 | SCUBA Diving/Tour Operation | All Designated Dive Sites | Lagoon & Reef | Under Review* |
| 16. Phoenix Enterprises, Inc. dba Phoenix Marine Sports | 3/22/2023 APC2023-0028 | Snorkeling, Sailing & Hobie Cats | Saipan & Managaha Lagoon | Lagoon & Reef | Under Review* |

NMIAIC §15-10-210 of the CRM Rules and Regulations requires all permit applications to be published in a newspaper for general circulation within the CNMI within 15 days of receipt of application. The list reflects recently received permit applications and those with a recent change in status. New applications are marked with an asterisk (*).

The Public is invited to submit written comments regarding any of the above projects for which a permit decision has not been issued. All permit comments should identify the project by application number. Your comments should be mailed or hand-delivered to the DCRM Office. All persons who desire a public hearing regarding any project may do so by submitting a written request for a public hearing to the DCRM Office within fourteen (14) days for minor permits (APCs) and proposed amended major sitings. Public Hearings are required for all new major siting projects. All public hearing notices are published in a local newspaper of general circulation. Residents of Rota and Tinian may submit comments and hearing requests to their local DCRM Coordinator. Persons wishing to retain the right to appeal a DCRM Permit decision must file a notice of appeal with the DCRM office within thirty (30) days of the issuance of the DCRM permit decision as provided in Part 200 § 15-10-235 of the CRM Regulations.

Transition report: CPA is in crisis

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The transition report on the Commonwealth Ports Authority claims that the agency is "crisis" due to multiple factors, including its alleged lack of prospects in averting a fiscal downturn by the end of this fiscal year.

According to Bruce Jorgensen, the CPA transition team member who was tasked with looking into CPA's federal and regulatory compliance, the CPA is in a "crisis" for multiple reasons, the most worrisome of which is CPA's alleged lack of funding prospects to avert a fiscal downturn. In addition, Jorgensen claims that CPA also faces a crisis due to management issues and alleged prospective sanctions by the Federal Aviation Administration.

"CPA is an entity in crisis and seemingly on the threshold of

a catastrophe due to: (1) long-standing and recurring management issues; (2) resulting criticism, warnings, intervention, and prospective sanctions—explicitly raised, documented, and detailed over the past four-plus years—by FAA and related federal regulatory/grant officials; and (3) seemingly few, if any, known prospects of averting a massive fiscal downturn by the end of the 2023 fiscal year, which CPA's current board should long ago have made transparent to all, but instead appears to have neither conceived, nor implemented, any contingency/remedial options or plans beyond hopes of tourism increases, and/or instituting CPA personnel reductions at the eleventh hour," said Jorgensen.

CPA chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds said in a statement that CPA cannot comment on the findings of the transition re-

port at this time as the board is still reviewing it and will be issuing a statement "once that review is completed."

Jorgensen stated in his report that because CPA has delayed, neglected, or failed to avail of federal grants and related supplemental funding avenues, it now faces a crisis.

The transition team member also reported that CPA has violated federal requisites for its "repetitive, perpetual" lapses in airport security.

In addition to this, Jorgensen claims that Saipan's airport tower has been inoperable for over four years now, adding that CPA never disclosed this to the public.

Also, Jorgensen stated that CPA has diverted seaport revenues to fund airport salaries and lacks transparency by allegedly not disclosing some of these findings to the public.

SCC sets April general membership meeting

The monthly general membership meeting of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce will be on April 5, 2023, from 11:30am to 1pm at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort.

The SCC will be having the committee chairs present updates, current issues, and committee events.

Following that, the SCC has

invited special guest speakers for the meeting: Commonwealth Bureau of Military Affairs special assistant Daniel Aquino, who will share military data and proposed activities within the CNMI, and Tinian Chamber of Commerce president Phillip Mendiola-Long, who will share the Tinian Chamber's role in the

military activities on Tinian.

Lunch will be served at 11:30am and the meeting will begin promptly at noon. The luncheon fee is \$25/Chamber member and \$35/non-member. To reserve or for more information, contact the Chamber office at (670) 234-7150 or email contactus@saipan-chamber.org. (PR)



American Red Cross
Northern Mariana Islands

**Saipan
Rota
Tinian**



Start Time: 6:00am Location: Guma Sakman-Susupe

Saturday April 22, 2023

Lots of fun for the whole family

10K, 5k, and 2k courses

A \$20.00 donation receives a t-shirt and give-a-ways
Free Sandwich and refreshments for walkers

Community Fair x Blood Pressure Checks
Immunizations x Cooking demonstration

Carnival Games x Face Painting x Bounce House

Fire truck & Military Vehicle show

Please support the American Red Cross

For more information please call the NMI Chapter at 234-3459

Premier Sponsor



Shirley's COFFEE SHOP
Home of the Best Fried Rice

Happy
COMMONWEALTH
COVENANT
Day
to all.

Best wishes for a happy and meaningful Commonwealth Covenant Day filled with hope and optimism.



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

Tels: (670) 234-6866
234-9447
234-7689
234-7670
Fax: (670) 234-9021

PUBLIC NOTICE

This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD funds.

COMBINED NOTICE OF FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT AND INTENT TO REQUEST RELEASE OF FUNDS

Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Northern Marianas Housing Corporation
Saipan, MP 96950 Tel: (670) 234-9447/6866

This notice shall satisfy the above-cited two separate but related procedural notification requirements.

REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

On or after April 10, 2023, the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands will submit a request to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Honolulu Field Office, for the release of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funds under Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383), as amended, to undertake the following projects and purposes in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands:

| Project/Activity Type | Purpose | Location | Total Project Cost |
|---|--|------------------|--------------------|
| Renovation of Tinian Little League Baseball Field | To inspire the younger generation to get out and engage with one another and help the younger generations in the community to become more physically active. | San, Jose Tinian | \$330,000.00 |

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands has determined that the above-listed projects will have no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) is not required. Additional project information is contained in the Environmental Review Record (ERR) on file at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation Central Office in Garapan, Saipan and may be examined or copied during regular work hours, Monday through Friday except CNMI or Austerity Holidays, from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Any individual, group or agency disagreeing with this determination or wishing to comment on the projects may submit written comments to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation, P.O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950 or direct delivery to the central office in Garapan, Saipan. All comments received by April 10, 2023, 4:30 p.m., will be considered by the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands prior to authorizing submission of a request for release of funds. Commentors should specify which part of this Notice they are addressing.

RELEASE OF FUNDS

The Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands certifies to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, HUD Honolulu Field Office that the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and Governor Ralph DLG. Torres consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal Courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to the environmental review process, and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office acceptance of the certification satisfies its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and related laws and authorities, and allows the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands to use Program Funds.

OBJECTION TO RELEASE OF FUNDS

The U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development HUD Honolulu Field Office will accept objections to its release of funds and the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands certification for a period of fifteen (15) days following anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request (whichever is later) only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) the certification was not executed by the Certifying Officer of the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands; (b) the Government of the Northern Mariana Islands has omitted a step or failed to make a decision or finding required by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development regulations at 24 CFR Part 58; (c) the grant recipient has incurred cost not authorized by 24 CFR Part 58 before approval of the release of funds by the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 40 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedures of 24 CFR Part 58 and shall be addressed to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Honolulu Field Office by email to CPD Honolulu Field Office: CPDHonolulu@hud.gov and CPD_COVID-19OEE-HNL@hud.gov. Potential objectors should contact the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

/s/
Arnold I. Palacios
Governor, CNMI

1st director of publishing leads UOG Press

Victoria-Lola Leon Guerrero officially leads the University of Guam Press as its first director of publishing. She has also taught creative writing and women and gender studies courses at the university.



Leon Guerrero

"As the director of publishing, I hope to continue to establish UOG Press as our region's premier publishing house dedicated to producing books and resources that capture the unique voices, groundbreaking research, historical perspectives, and cultural values and traditions of the peoples of Micronesia," Leon Guerrero said. "It has been incredible to witness the many ways our books have transformed local classrooms and community spaces and inspired young people to express themselves and tell their own stories. I am excited to read the future publications that will spark from these efforts."

Leon Guerrero holds over 20 years of experience as a published author, professional editor, educator, and community organizer. She earned a master's degree in Creative Writing from Mills College and a bachelor's degree in Politics from the University of San Francisco.

Leon Guerrero has worked at UOG for over 10 years, starting in 2009 as an instructor of English com-

increased accessibility to literature throughout communities in Micronesia, selling over 40,000 volumes of books; established regional and national partnerships with other academic institutions including the Northern Marianas College and New York University Press; garnered grants and contracts to support various publishing efforts including the development of textbooks and other curriculum resources for the Guam Department of Education; and fostered local authors and artists through creative workshops, retreats and fellowships.

Recognizing the growth and success of the Press, the university created a director of publishing position in December 2021 and Leon Guerrero was appointed interim director while the university conducted a hiring search. She applied

and was selected for the position in December 2022.

Prestigious residency program

While much of Leon Guerrero's work has centered on creating opportunities within the community, she has also been successful at establishing the Press's national reputation. Last year, UOG Press became an affiliate member of the Association of University Presses and Leon Guerrero was recently accepted for a prestigious Press Director Residency Program, through which she will spend two weeks shadowing and learning from the directors of Princeton University Press, New York University Press, and Fordham University Press.

"This is an incredible opportunity to gain firsthand experience at a variety of university presses and learn from their best practices and publishing approaches," Leon Guerrero shared. "It will also allow me to promote the work of UOG Press. I will gain mentorship and hope to bring back what I learn to continue to expand what is possible here."

For more information or inquiries contact UOG Press publicist Via De Fant at defant@triton.uog.edu or call (671) 735-2153. (UOG)

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



INVITATION FOR BID CUC-IFB-23-006



Isley Field and Obyan Wells Granular Activated Carbon Water Filtration System Construction Project

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Isley Field and Obyan Wells Granular Activated Carbon Water Filtration System Construction Project for IF 208, OB 6, OB 19 and OB 23 in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of Owner Furnished GAC units, chain link fence removal and installation of new chain link fence, connection of the new waterline to existing waterline, connection of the influent and effluent lines of the GAC units to the existing waterline.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States of Economic Development Authority (USED) and OIA. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USED and OIA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **210 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference followed by site visits will be held on **March 31, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-23-006, Isley Field and Obyan Wells Granular Activated Carbon Water Filtration System Construction Project" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 25, 2023, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of not less than fifteen (15%) percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A Payment Bond of one hundred (100%) percent and a Performance Bond of one hundred (100%) of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on April 7, 2023** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address, manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer, Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Dennis Formalejo, Engineer, Senior via email at dennis.formalejo@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Senior Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org. CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLÁN
Purchasing Administrator

Saipan commuter terminal parking lot to be closed

The commuter terminal parking lot at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport will be closed to the public starting March 28, 2023, as the Commonwealth Ports Authority's contractor will be moving heavy equipment to that area.

In a notice yesterday, it said that CPA's contractor, Hong Ye Rental & Construction, will soon begin its mobilization work for the Saipan commuter terminal project. This includes installing a site office, staging

area, and safety barricades, which will be positioned within the existing commuter terminal parking lot. As heavy equipment will be moved in that area, public access to the commuter terminal parking lot will not be allowed.

Commuter users are advised to look for parking in alternative locations at the airport. CPA anticipates that the commuter terminal parking lot will be closed until the project is completed in June 2024.

"If your vehicle is currently parked in the commuter terminal parking lot, please move your vehicle before Monday, March 27, 2023. After that date, all unauthorized vehicles remaining in the commuter terminal parking lot will be towed at the owner's expense," stated the CPA notice. "CPA appreciates the public's cooperation and understanding as it moves forward with this important project." (Saipan Tribune)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Monday jury selection cancelled

This is to inform all prospective jurors on panel "21ES" that the jury selection scheduled for Monday, March 27, 2023 at 8:30am is hereby cancelled. For further information contact Clerk of Court Patrick Diaz at Superior Court at (670) 236-9783 or (670) 783-8522. (PR)

Red Cross Walkathon on April 22

The 34th annual Red Cross Walkathon will take place on April 22 near the Guma Sakman building in Susupe. The walk will feature a 10K, 5K, and 2K course along the Beach Road Pathway. There will be T-shirts, refreshments, games and a community fair.

Please mark your calendar and help support the Red Cross and its humanitarian mission here in the CNMI. The walkathon will also be held on the same day on Rota and Tinian. The walkathon title sponsor this year is Aetna Insurance. T-shirts have been donated by VANS "OFF THE WALL." For more information about how to participate, volunteer or donate, call the Red Cross office at 234-3459. (PR)

Rotary to host Easter egg hunt on April 1

The Rotary Club of Saipan will host our annual Easter egg hunt on Saturday, April 1. The event will be held on the CNMI Museum grounds on Middle Road.

The hunt will begin at 8:00 am. Please bring your own Easter baskets for your children and join us! (PR)

Power service interruption in Kagman II

There will be a scheduled power service interruption in Kagman II on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, from 9am to 12pm. No water well, wastewater facility, or traffic light will be affected. For more information, contact the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. hotline at (670) 236-4333 or monitor CUC's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>) for the latest updates. (PR)



File photo shows the commuter terminal parking lot at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. (Bea O'Malley)

Attorney General's Cup set for May 5

After a 36-month hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 37th Annual Attorney General's Cup speech competition will finally take place this year on May 5, 2023, at 9:30am at the Guma Hustisia Supreme Court.

"I am delighted to announce the return of the AG's Cup speech competition," stated Attorney General Edward Manibusan in announcing the return of the competition yesterday. "The resumption of the competition is long overdue, but ensuring the safety and health of our students and the community was of significant importance and putting a hold on the event the past couple of years was imperative."

The topic for the 37th annual

speech competition is affirmative action in higher education. The issue is before the U.S. Supreme Court and is significant as it will have an effect on the Northern Mariana Islands as students seek college admission in the United States.

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on two cases regarding the issue of affirmative action in college admissions: (1) Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard and (2) Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina.

At the heart of these two cases is decadeslong precedent regarding affirmative action. Affirmative action began as a government remedy to the effects of longstanding dis-

crimination against minorities and women and has consisted of policies, programs, and procedures that give limited preferences to such groups in job hiring, admission to institutions of higher education, the awarding of government contracts, and other social benefits. Typically, affirmative action in the educational arena is a policy that uses race as a basis for admission.

Manibusan welcomes the public to attend the event and support the students of the CNMI. For more information on the speech competition, contact Andrea Manese at the Office of the Attorney General's Civil Division at 237-7500 or through email at andrea_manese@cnmioga.org. (PR)



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-052

Opening Date: March 14, 2023
Closing Date: UNTIL FILLED



POSITION TITLE:
DEPARTMENT:
LOCATION:
ANNUAL SALARY:
CONTRACT:
POSITION(S):

In-House Legal Counsel
Executive Director/Administration
Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
\$65,000.00 - \$85,000.00 per annum, Exempt
Contracted
One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Executive Director or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of ED/Administration Division.

Duties:

- Provide formal and informal legal advice to management;
- Drafts and reviews a broad range of legal documents, including legal opinions, proposed agency decisions, memoranda, contracts and other procurement documents;
- Represents CUC at a variety of meetings, negotiations and hearings;
- Provides legal oversight of procurement contracts for goods, services, and construction;
- Assists management with developing policy and regulations to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulatory policies, including both local and federal statutes;
- Investigates and implements necessary actions for compliance with laws and corporate policies;
- Works closely with outside counsel regarding ongoing litigation;
- Advises management of a variety of legal issues, including, but not limited to, billing disputes, human resources matters, property-related disputes, contract negotiations and interpretations, and personal-injury claims;
- Assists management with developing policy and regulations;
- Performs short- and long-range strategic planning;
- Perform other duties of similar nature and level as assigned by management.

Education:

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS: Hold a law degree from an accredited U.S. law school. Be a current member in good standing of the bar of any state within the United States, the CNMI or Guam. If not currently a member of the CNMI Bar, be eligible for prompt admission to the CNMI Bar. For admission requirements, visit http://www.cnmilaw.org/court_rules.htm. Have excellent interpersonal skills, be mature and self-sufficient, communicate effectively orally and in writing, and possess excellent professional judgement.

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS: Although not required, successful candidates preferably will have: Experience with utility law, federal and/or state energy regulatory law, and government procurement; Contract drafting and negotiation skills; Familiarity with working in a highly regulated industry; An understanding of the economics of electric power; A working knowledge of the legal and commercial issues involved in procurement, construction contracts, project finance, operations and maintenance agreements, and other utility project agreements; Experience working for or appearing before a federal regulatory agency; Strong business judgment and the ability to understand and respond to business issues and needs; Self-motivation, self-discipline and be results-oriented, with an ability to manage priorities and workflow; The ability to independently and handle both small and large matters with equal effectiveness and enthusiasm; A background in finance, accounting, engineering, or economics; An ability to manage multiple complex matters simultaneously.

Knowledge of: Applicable hardware, software, system and technology principles, methods and support techniques; Systems analysis and design methods, procedures and techniques; Business methods, principles and practices; Customer service principles; Database maintenance principles; Modern office technology; Budgeting Principles; and Basic mathematics.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131
CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-056

Opening Date: March 21, 2023
Closing Date: April 04, 2023

POSITION TITLE:
DEPARTMENT:
LOCATION:
ANNUAL SALARY:
CONTRACT:
POSITION(S):

Trades Assistant
Tinian Water Division
Tinian, Northern Mariana Islands, USA
\$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
Not Contracted
One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Resident Manager or his/her designee.

- Assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities.
- Performing daily well and pump station facility maintenance, cleaning and monitoring;
- Assisting plumbing and chlorine maintenance crew;
- Utilizing digging equipment for locating and repairing leaks;
- Repairing and securing pressure reducer valves, main valves, service lines and laterals, and booster pumps;
- Assisting with meter installation and repair;
- Collecting water samples.
- Must be able to lift objects weighing at 40 lbs. or more.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS Diploma.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required for assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing:

- Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Iraq, 20 years later

Twenty years ago, the United States launched its first wave of attacks against Iraq. The mission to depose Saddam Hussein began with overwhelming popular support at home as Americans rallied to the Bush administration's insistence that Iraq's weapons stockpile posed a grave risk to the country and the world at large.

Time revealed the extent of that folly and the hubris invading and indefinitely occupying a diverse nation of 27 million. It came at a cost: thousands of American lives, possibly hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives, trillions of dollars and the tarnishing of our nation's reputation.

What the country should not forget—what it must not forget—is the selfless sacrifice of the American armed forces who risked their lives in the noble hope of helping Iraq forge a democratic future. Many of these heroes live here in Hampton Roads, and while Americans are right to view the war unfavorably, the warriors who served deserve our gratitude, our compassion and our ceaseless support.

It wasn't long after the Sept. 11 attacks and the invasion of Afghanistan that the Bush administration turned its attention to Iraq and the Hussein regime, which had for years resisted international efforts to inspect weapons labs and assure the destruction of chemical and biological agents.

With a broad mandate to pursue the al-Qaida terrorist network, President George W. Bush ramped up pressure on Iraq, building the case for war. The administration provided intelligence, later proved false, that received endorsement by Congress and the backing of the American people.

Assertions that coalition forces would be greeted as liberators proved true—for a time. The Hussein regime was quickly deposed and the president eventually arrested. But the officials who assumed control of the country made repeated mistakes, including the De-Ba'athification policies that put tens of thousands of civilians and hundreds of thousands of Iraq servicemembers out of work. Those idle hands would fuel a resulting insurgency that raged for years.

Through it all, however, the members of the American military deployed to Iraq largely acted with honor and professionalism with whatever came their way. They risked life and limb to liberate the country, battle the insurgency and help rebuild a country that could sustain itself in peace with its neighbors.

There were undoubtedly some who disgraced themselves and their country. The torture and humiliation of prisoners at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison outside of Baghdad was one such disgusting episode and part of a larger pattern of abuse in American-run prisons and detention centers.

But the burden of service in that war and in Afghanistan largely fell to a relatively small number of Americans as much of the nation moved on to other distractions. All told, about 1.9 million service members served in country and another 1 million in support capacities or in related theaters.

Unlike in many previous conflicts, such as Vietnam, these men and women volunteered for the military. And given the length of those wars, many joined knowing the risk they could face on the front lines.

According to the Department of Defense, 4,431 service members died in Iraq. Another 32,000 were wounded, including more than 1,500 who lost a limb. And suicide has claimed more than four times the number of veteran lives than those

See IRAQ on Page 11



Americans are terrified of other Americans. How to stop the polarization

A few months ago, I knocked on the front door of a house in El Centro while searching for Republicans to interview for a story. An elderly white man opened the main door of the house but left the screen door closed. I struggled to see him through the screen door's mesh. I told him I was a journalist hoping to learn about his political views, and that I couldn't see him very well. "That's the point," he told me.

He seemed angry. He said President Joe Biden was a "dumbass," adding: "We need to hunt down all the illegals and get them the hell out of this country!" I asked: "Hunt them down?" He said: "Hunt them down!" As I struggled to understand his perspective by asking more questions, he became more and more condescending: "Don't you read? Don't you understand history?" As I was responding that I'd been reporting on the border since Obama was president, he interrupted: "Obama was a dumbass n—."

I ended the interview. What was the point of continuing a conversation with a man so unabashed in his bigotry? This man, I thought, was a threat to me and people I love. He clearly felt the same about me. We weren't alone in our grim judgments. Most Americans today see other Americans as threats. A plurality believe other Americans are the No. 1 threat to their way of life, according to a CBS News/YouGov poll released last summer. In the fall, an NBC News poll found that 80% of Democrats and Republicans believe political opposition "poses a threat that, if not stopped, will destroy America as we know it."

It has become an article of faith in left-wing and right-wing activist circles that a crucial way to counter the threat is by naming it. Republicans are no longer Republicans and Democrats are no longer Democrats. Instead, we're all called fascists.

But what if the threats we represent are rooted in this way we demonize one another? What if our perception of adversaries as mortal enemies is a delusion that creates its own reality and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy?

The two sides are not equally situated. Studies show Republicans have moved farther to the right than Democrats have to the left, and right-wing extremists are the most likely to embrace violence. The GOP is engaged in an assault on the bodily autonomy of women, people of color and transgender people. There is no comparable assault on people's rights from Democrats, although many Republicans would disagree.

But how can I hope to persuade Republicans to change their minds if I'm convinced they're all extremists? Where I see fascists and neo-Nazis, I see no possibility for dialogue. Accurate as those labels may be, they also limit my ability to see an op-

By JEAN GUERRERO
Los Angeles Times

Jean Guerrero is an opinion columnist at the Los Angeles Times.



ponent's potential for change. As Mónica Guzmán wrote in her book, "I Never Thought Of It That Way," a guide for talking with our opponents, polarization is "the problem that eats other problems, the monster who convinces us that the monsters are us."

Earlier that day in El Centro, I interviewed Republicans who expressed ideas I believed to be delusional and dangerous, but I was able to sustain conversations with them. Unlike the angry old man, they talked with me eye-to-eye. They didn't use slurs or other labels.

One man who said he believes immigrants at the border are "replacing" Americans also expressed empathy for "those poor souls coming across the river." Not exactly the words I expected from a man who subscribes to a white supremacist conspiracy theory.

Since that man very likely votes for the same politicians as the angry old man, he's arguably as much of a threat in putting right-wing authoritarians in office. But if I don't allow for the possibility of finding common ground with him, I'm surrendering all hope that this country can survive the chasm that separates us.

Of course, there is a place for strong condemnation. It's why I went against my aversion to labeling people and titled my biography of Trump adviser Stephen Miller "Hatemonger." The media too often whitewashes the actions and rhetoric of people in power. We have a responsibility to criticize our leaders.

But I'm not so sure that labeling ordinary people who support those leaders does any good. While it's true that the power of demagogues comes from the masses of ordinary people who support them, it's also true that the devotion of those masses stems from a moral outrage aggravated by the moral outrage of the other side.

When we use derogatory labels, we're disregarding the lessons of nonviolent communication that are well-known among psychologists and mediators who study peaceful conflict resolution. "Most of us grew up speaking a language that encourages us to label, compare, demand, and pronounce judgments rather

See AMERICANS on Page 11

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

For Iraqis like me, the US invasion 20 years ago isn't a distant memory—it's our daily devastation

In March 2003, I was in my second year at the University of Baghdad, studying engineering. The U.S. invaded Iraq and my dormitory emptied out, as we all returned home and waited to see what would happen.

In my hometown of Basra, we watched U.S.-led coalition troops surging into the city. Yet people still couldn't believe it—that longtime dictator Saddam Hussein was gone. For it to be real, we had to wait for Baghdad to fall and only once we saw that on television did we trust this new reality. On our screens, a coalition-run TV channel called al-Hurriya, or "Freedom" in Arabic, broadcast the iconic scene of Hussein's statue in Baghdad being demolished and the bronze face covered by an American flag.

Two decades on, we have learned that spectacle was mere propaganda, and that freedom cannot be imposed by an occupying force. And all these years later, I'm still struck by this contrast: The magnitude of what Iraqis lost—and continue to lose—and how vivid our memories are of the war, as we must deal with the repercussions in our daily lives, whereas the war has become a blurry image for Americans.

On the day the statue fell, I recalled that historic scene with a widowed neighbor in his 60s. He sarcastically portrayed it this way: "This is what would happen if you dismantled a scary toy, which kids have tried desperately to dismantle by themselves for 30 years!" For him, Hussein represented the shattered toy, and the crowds who previously would have been too afraid of him were now kicking his statue fearlessly. Weeks later, the neighbor, who had been a prominent member of Hussein's Baath Party, knew that civilian militias were out for revenge. Before they got to him, he shot himself in his bathroom.

By then, the entire city had sunk into chaos. Masses of people

roamed Basra barefoot, with happiness and tears, while searching for their missing relatives who had been detained by the Baath Party for decades. I too became enthusiastic and curious. There were rumors of underground prisons. People believed voices were coming out from the concrete walls of the Baath party offices, where their loved ones may have been trapped for decades, like ancient fossils.

Myths and truths shuffled simultaneously. I observed a real crowd of prisoners, their pale-yellow faces exposed to the sun after years of darkness. They broke out of the jails and chased people who avoided them due to their stinky smell. They kept roving, asking, "Where is the exit?" as though they were still inside.

Despite so many conflicting feelings those days, Iraqi souls were fueled by hope. If you'd asked them then what was the worst scenario they could imagine for their future, they would never have envisioned themselves where they are now. It was a moment of great expectations. The decades of tyranny by Baath men in olive uniforms were over; we supposedly were reaching the end of the tunnel, but what was a bright light at the end turned out to be a flare of a forthcoming hell.

We got the TV channel Freedom, but freedom didn't materialize, and what followed were two decades of brutal civil wars, political turmoil, widespread corruption, sectarian tensions, looting of our history from museums and archaeological sites, interventions of adjacent countries and Islamic State's extremist insurgency that seized a third of the country.

Under Hussein's rule, we recited three words every morning at school: Unity, freedom, socialism.

During the first decade after the American invasion, that dictionary changed a bit. American missiles were to bring us "democracy" from the sky, while the language of suicide bombers and religious radicals took root on the earth. Each new Iraqi ministry was supplemented by a U.S. adviser, yet almost half a million people had been killed.

Iraqis became badly divided. Shrines and mosques started exploding, as sectarian checkpoints cropped up to examine your identity and figure out your sect. Hundreds of civilians

By MORTADA GZAR

Los Angeles Times



Mortada Gzar is a writer and animator based in Seattle. He is the author of five novels and the memoir, *I'm in Seattle, Where Are You?* @GzarMortada

were slaughtered just because their names pointed to the opposite sect. Then, in the second decade, Islamic State carried out a reign of terror in northern Iraq that included rape, abductions, executions, mass murder, extortion and seizure of state resources. In Iraq's parliamentary system today, new mini-Saddams have emerged in national politics out of the country's various religious and political factions, carrying on his regime's brutal legacy.

Looking back 20 years, the invasion didn't just change Iraq's future, it altered the world's memory about Iraq and its people. Once known as the home of Mesopotamia, one of the world's early civilizations, Iraq became associated with terror. Its two legendary rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, are choking, as Iraq's new leaders have failed to protect our water resources, and climate change threatens to run them dry. Iraqis who had the ability to leave fled to wherever they could be safe and build a life.

I came to the U.S. seven years ago; it wasn't easy to leave my home. When I tell Americans that I'm from Iraq, they typically have negative perceptions about the country and its people, and lack basic knowledge, including place names or even where it is on the map. Often, I run into American soldiers who did a tour there. A few weeks ago, a woman told me she served in Mosul. "I helped people there," she said, excitedly. It's very hard for Iraqis to see the American military presence as having helped us, given what we've lived through.

Despite all the tragedy, our country is not broken forever. I know young activists, artists and journalists expressing themselves, even risking their lives. We're still working on democracy, on our own terms, and we know democracy is a long process—after all, the U.S. is still working on its democracy, even after 200 years.

Supporting US bases in the Philippines isn't an option

By BERNADETTE ELLORIN and AZADEH SHAHSHAHANI
PROGRESSIVE PERSPECTIVES

The Philippines remains the largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the Indo-Pacific region, having received more than \$1.14 billion in funding from 2015 to 2022. These bases were used in every major U.S. war in the 20th century, as well as serving as "rest and recreation" sites for military personnel, in which an exploitative informal sex worker industry was made into an unofficial policy.

More than a century of systemic human rights violations—including gang rape, indiscriminate shootings and murder—have been committed by the U.S. military in the Philippines since the United States invaded and colonized the country in 1899. These crimes led in part to a nationwide social movement to close the Subic Bay Naval and Clark Air Force bases. By 1991, in an attempt to finally rollback U.S. colonial control, the Philippine Senate chose to not renew the U.S. military bases treaty.

The United States was key in propping up and emboldening martial law under the fascist dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos Sr. from 1965 to 1986. But last year, 36 years after the People Power uprising that ousted Marcos's reign, the Marcos dynasty returned with the election of Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., Ferdinand Sr.'s son, as president.

Now, the United States is once again supporting an authoritarian leader by spending lavish sums of money on military aid. And with recent official visits by Vice President Kamala Harris and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, an agreement to build four new U.S. military locations in the Philippines was solidified.

Filipino-Americans and allies in the United States played a role in the defeat of the Marcos Sr. dictatorship in the 1970s and 1980s. The assassination in 1981 of U.S. labor leaders Silme

Domingo and Gene Viernes by Marcos-hired agents in Seattle proves this; both were active in persuading workers to support the Philippine trade union movement's opposition to Marcos.

Today, Marcos Jr. has fulfilled his campaign promise to beef up the budget for the National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, a Philippine government agency established by his predecessor Rodrigo Duterte that conducts operations overseas to surveil and suppress Filipino activism, including in the United States, where Filipino critics of Duterte and Marcos are labeled as terrorists.

There is already a movement to pressure Congress to cut U.S. military aid to the Philippines via the Philippine Human Rights Act, which has widespread support from labor and faith groups. But there is still much to be done to end U.S. military support to another Marcos presidency that is continuing to embolden its fascist attacks.

Taxpayers should not be on the hook for these military deals in light of the resurging social movements to end U.S. military presence in the country. We should, instead, remember the United States' brutal colonization of the Filipino people, whose demands for the withdrawal of U.S. military presence and military aid, as well as justice for survivors of crimes committed by U.S. troops, ring loudly and painfully to this day.

Bernadette Ellorin is the national spokesperson for the U.S. Chapter of Bagong Alyansang Makabayan, or Bayan USA, an anti-imperialist alliance of 33 Filipino grassroots organizations across the United States. Azadeh Shahshahani is legal & advocacy director for Project South and a past president of the National Lawyers Guild; she tweets @ashahshahani. This column was produced for the Progressive Perspectives, which is run by The Progressive magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.

IRAQ

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killed in the war itself.

The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University estimates the "total costs of caring for veterans of the post-9/11 wars are estimated to reach between \$2.2 trillion and \$2.5 trillion."

It is a bill the nation should gladly pay, as it should whenever it sends its sons and daughters, husbands and wives, into harm's way. The expense of war isn't just in the fighting but also, in Abraham Lincoln's words, "to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."

As America marks this anniversary, we must never forget that awesome responsibility.

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AMERICANS

From page 10

than to be aware of what we are feeling and needing," wrote psychologist and peacemaker Marshall B. Rosenberg in his acclaimed 1999 book, "Nonviolent Communication."

In the era of social media, it has become even more trendy to troll and shame. But most of us who are in therapy have learned that moralistic judgments—in the form of labels, insults, diagnoses, blame and more—fuel defensiveness and doubling down from others. That communication style also stokes violence, according to Rosenberg.

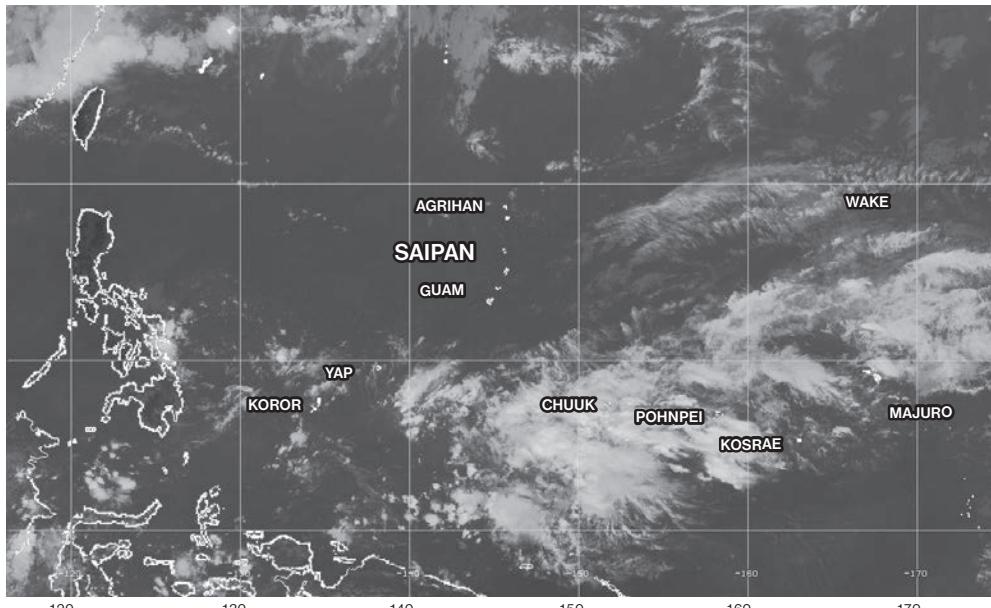
It's not fair that anybody has to engage with people less inclined to see them as equals, but what choice do we have? The only other options are national divorce or civil war.

For a relationship to survive, it's best to communicate "what we are observing, feeling, and needing," Rosenberg wrote, rather than naming the other's wrongness. Communicating with an open heart inspires others to do the same. It's human nature to mirror other people. We all need more faith in our ability to connect with the other. Risky as that may sound, it can't be riskier than giving up on the humanity of our fellow Americans.

The Weather

| 5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| TODAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY |
| | | | | |
| Isolated showers. Mostly sunny | Isolated showers. Mostly sunny | Mostly sunny | Mostly sunny | Mostly sunny |
| 86° | 74° | 86° | 74° | 86° |
| 74° | 86° | 74° | 86° | 74° |

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 2:42 PM, THURSDAY, MARCH 22, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

An east to west oriented ridge of high pressure centered around 900 miles north of Hagatna is driving moderate trade winds across the Marianas this afternoon. Visible satellite imagery shows a dry and stable airmass over the area, with partly cloudy conditions and only a few light showers being pushed along by the trades.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

| MICRONESIA | | |
|---------------|------------------------|-----------|
| | ▲ | ▼ °F |
| Guam and Rota | Partly Cloudy | 86° / 76° |
| Palau | Thunderstorms | 82° / 76° |
| Yap | Isolated Thunderstorms | 85° / 79° |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorms | 82° / 77° |
| Pohnpei | Cloudy | 86° / 76° |
| Kosrae | Partly Cloudy | 87° / 79° |
| Majuro | Thunderstorms | 84° / 78° |

| DAY | SUNRISE | SUNSET |
|----------|---------|---------|
| Today | 6:18 AM | 6:28 PM |
| Saturday | 6:18 AM | 6:28 PM |
| Sunday | 6:17 AM | 6:28 PM |
| Monday | 6:16 AM | 6:28 PM |
| Tuesday | 6:15 AM | 6:28 PM |

| DAY | MOONRISE | MOONSET | MOONRISE |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Today | 7:59 AM | 8:53 PM | - |
| Saturday | 8:41 AM | 9:49 PM | - |
| Sunday | 9:25 AM | 10:45 PM | - |
| Monday | 10:13 AM | 11:41 PM | - |
| Tuesday | 11:02 AM | - | - |

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| AROUND THE GLOBE | | |
|------------------|---------------|-----------|
| | ▲ | ▼ °F |
| Auckland | Thunderstorms | 70° / 57° |
| Beijing | Mostly Sunny | 55° / 37° |
| Hong Kong | Thunderstorms | 78° / 72° |
| Honolulu | Sunny/Wind | 84° / 73° |
| London | Partly Cloudy | 48° / 40° |
| Los Angeles | Partly Cloudy | 76° / 50° |
| Manila | Partly Cloudy | 89° / 78° |
| Melbourne | Cloudy | 62° / 52° |
| Miami | Rain | 78° / 75° |
| New York | Showers | 62° / 47° |
| Osaka | Cloudy | 65° / 51° |
| Paris | Showers | 50° / 43° |
| Busan | Light Rain | 66° / 54° |
| Rome | Rain/Thunder | 62° / 43° |
| Salem | Mostly Sunny | 60° / 43° |
| San Francisco | Partly Cloudy | 64° / 42° |
| Seoul | Cloudy | 62° / 39° |
| Tokyo | Showers | 74° / 52° |
| Washington, DC | Showers | 76° / 57° |

| TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|------|
| | FEET | |
| 3:28 AM | High Tide | 0.47 |
| 9:10 AM | Low Tide | 1.93 |
| 3:57 PM | High Tide | 0.07 |
| 10:10 PM | Low Tide | 1.82 |

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 1, 2023

| DEPARTURES | | | | ARRIVALS | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------|---------------|------------------------|
| SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) | | | | GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117 | 9:50AM | 10:35AM | Daily | UA174 | 8:00AM | 8:46AM | Daily |
| SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT) | | | | NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA824 | 7:05AM | 9:45AM | 1, 3, 5 | UA825 | 9:25PM | 2:00AM+1 | 2, 4, 7 |
| GUAM-MANILA (MNL) | | | | MANILA (MNL)-GUAM | | | |
| PR 111 | 5:30AM | 7:25AM | Daily | PR110 | 10:05PM | 3:55AM+1 | Daily |
| UA193 | 7:55PM | 11:50PM | 2, 5 via Palau | UA184 | 10:55PM | 4:45AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| UA183 | 8:00PM | 9:50PM | Daily | UA192 | 10:40PM | 6:30AM+1 | 2, 5 via Palau |
| | | | | UA189 | 12:40AM | 6:30AM | 3, 6 |
| SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) | | | | MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117/183 | 9:50AM | 9:50PM | Daily via Guam | UA189/174 | 12:40AM | 8:46AM+1 | 3, 6 via Guam |
| UA117/193 | 9:50AM | 11:50PM | 2, 5 via Guam, Palau | UA184/174 | 10:55PM | 8:46AM+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via Guam |
| SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN) | | | | INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN | | | |
| TW308 | 3:15AM | 6:55AM | 1, 4, 5, 7 | 7C3406 | 10:10AM | 3:30PM | Daily |
| TW9308 | 3:50AM | 7:20AM | 4, 7 | TW307 | 8:45PM | 2:15AM+1 | 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| 7C3405 | 4:35PM | 8:25PM | Daily | TW9307 | 9:20PM | 2:50AM+1 | 3, 6 |
| LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, TWay Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.) | | | | | | | |
| MARIANAS SOUTHERN AIRWAYS | | | | | | | |
| INITIAL DAILY FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 6, 2023 | | | | | | | |
| SAIPAN TO TINIAN | | | | TINIAN TO SAIPAN | | | |
| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY | | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY | |
| 11:20 A.M. | 11:38 A.M. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | | 12:00 P.M. | 12:18 P.M. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | |
| 3:40 P.M. | 3:58 P.M. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | | 4:20 P.M. | 4:38 P.M. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | |
| 9:40 A.M. | 9:58 A.M. | 6,7 | | 10:20 A.M. | 10:38 A.M. | 6,7 | |
| SAIPAN TO ROTA | | | | ROTA TO SAIPAN | | | |
| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY | | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY | |
| 7:20 A.M. | 8:00 A.M. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | | 10:20 A.M. | 11:00 A.M. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | |
| 5:00 P.M. | 5:40 P.M. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | | 6:00 P.M. | 6:40 P.M. | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 | |
| 7:40 A.M. | 8:20 A.M. | 6,7 | | 8:40 A.M. | 9:20 A.M. | 6,7 | |
| 3:00 P.M. | 3:40 P.M. | 6,7 | | 4:00 P.M. | 4:40 P.M. | 6,7 | |
| SAIPAN TO GUAM | | | | GUAM TO SAIPAN | | | |
| DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY | | DEPARTS | ARRIVES | FREQUENCY | |
| 12:0 | | | | | | | |

Navy revitalizes Port of Tinian; extends life of port infrastructure

By RACHEL LANDERS
JOINT REGION MARIANAS

TINIAN, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands—Bubbling under the waters at the Port of Tinian, a team of sailors from Underwater Construction Team Two could be seen welding zinc anodes to the north quay wall earlier this year. UCT Two's repair work was part of an ongoing series of improvements to Tinian's harbor.

The dual-use port is the key supply gateway for the residents of Tinian and supports military operations in the region. The U.S. Navy built the port in the 1940s and it has been subject to the effects of constant exposure to the elements. In 2018, detailed infrastructure assessments by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers indicated the port was suffering from significant corrosion. Improvements have been underway since 2020. These improvements included the repair of crumbling bollards and resurfacing aging concrete. When it came time to conduct underwater construction repairs, a team of specialists was brought in: UCT Two.

UCT Two, under Navy Expeditionary Forces Command Pacific Task Force 75, is a specialized group of U.S. Navy divers who provide responsive military capabilities for underwater and waterfront engineering, construction, and repair in support of Navy and Marine Corps operations.

UCT Two sent three different detachments to work on the project over the past two years: Construction Dive Detachment Alpha, Beta and Charlie. The most recent detachment, CDD Charlie, has been working on repairs and corrosion control in the port since December 2022.

The 12-man team wrapped up their work in February with zinc anode installation. The zinc anodes are an important finishing touch to protect the port from corrosion. Anodes made with zinc can be found in harbors and on large ships around the world, where they are used to protect metal from the corrosive effects of water. At the Port of Tinian, UCT Two affixed 131 anodes to the quay walls to increase the longevity of the infrastructure. "You can actually see them if you are on top of the surface, these big silver things," said Andres Reyes of Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command Marianas, and the environmental lead for the project. "Corrosion is going to happen no matter what, but it corrodes the zinc first before it corrodes the steel."

Affixing the anodes to the quay walls was not as straightforward as it might seem. Each

anode is five feet long and weighs 150 lbs. Divers had to transport equipment and safety gear from the surface to the underwater welding site, where they had to work with the ocean current and visibility conditions in the port waters. In addition, the team needed to accommodate environmental mitigation measures that required they leave the sea floor undisturbed.

To meet these requirements the team designed a custom-built welding platform. Lt. j.g. Daniel Nick, officer in charge of UCT Two, explained "Construction Mechanic 2nd Class Conner Clemons, the project supervisor welded [the platform] during the planning in California. He welded it together himself. It gives the divers a workspace and gives us leverage we didn't have before, trying to reach the sites for welding. Being on the platform gives us more capability and makes the work efficient."

The trailer mounts of two pickup trucks suspended the platform above the sea floor. A hand winch was used to lower or raise the platform depending on the depth needed. This movable platform ensured divers were able to work on their projects safely, efficiently, and without inadvertently disrupting the marine life.

The diving platform was not the only environmental protection measure needed for the repairs at the port. Earlier detachments from UCT Two had to address a number of coral species growing within the harbor. The harbor environment, with all its infrastructure upgrades, would not be suitable for the endangered coral life. To protect the coral, CDD Alpha trained and executed a massive coral translocation.

"The process of moving the coral is ultimately very complex," Reyes said. Reyes was heavily involved in the complex environmental coordination procedures for the port improvements, especially the coral translocation. "From the beginning, there was a lot of agency coordination since the site where the coral would be relocated falls outside of the military's jurisdiction."

Although the Port of Tinian was under U.S. Navy's area of responsibility, the long-term monitoring site recommended by the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality and the CNMI Department of Fish and Wildlife was not.

Reyes said the process for approval and permitting to meet compliance and repair needs was constantly evolving over the course of two years.

"There were definitely a lot of unique things we needed to do and address in order to



Members from Underwater Construction Team 2 and Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 3 Detachment Tinian conduct coral translocation efforts as part of environment preservation, during repairs to a Roll-on, Roll-off Discharge Facility in Tinian Harbor.

U.S. NAVY/LT. TYLER BALDINO

proceed," he said. "From the Army Corps to the CNMI agencies, we had to be very creative on how we approached the entire thing. It took a team effort across the whole board."

The environmental team for the project worked closely with agencies including the CNMI State Historic Preservation Office, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Fisheries Service, the CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality, and the CNMI Bureau of Military Affairs Office, among many others.

Once the paperwork was in order, the actual technique for moving the coral from one location to another required special training.

Reyes explained, "for some of these guys, it was their first time ever moving coral. They had to be trained, that was 16 hours over two days of training consisting of both classroom and in-water portion, learning the whole biology and the methodology for moving the colonies."

UCT Two divers carefully detached each individual coral from the port surfaces and brought them to a staging area where each one was identified, measured, and documented. At the new site, just outside of the Tinian harbor, the substrate of each coral was evaluated for optimal relocation. A selected site was scrubbed with a wire brush and prepped with a specialized concrete mixture.

"For the reattachment, we actually used a pretty com-

See NAVY on Page 14

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY(CPA)

Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950 • Phone: (670) 237-6500 • Fax: (670) 234-5962
Website: www.cnmiports.com



AMENDED NOTICE TO BIDDERS

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY (CPA) is inviting qualified contractors to submit bid proposals and their qualifications for the PORT OF SAIPAN BERTH 103 REPAIRS, Project No. CPA-SS-001-17, for the island of Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Bidders are to submit one original and two copies of their bid which shall be sealed in an envelope and marked on the cover package outside as follows: PORT OF SAIPAN BERTH 103 REPAIRS, CPA-SS-001-17 and submitted no later than 2:00 P.M. (CHST), FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2023, to the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, at which time and place the sealed proposals will be publicly opened and read. Bidders are requested to minimize their company's attendees to ensure social distancing.

The Project, in general, consists of Berth 103 Cavity Repairs including all associated work, all in accordance with the Plans and Specifications.

The Project is being financed by the Commonwealth Ports Authority. The contract award, if it is to be made, will be made within one hundred twenty (120) calendar days from the receipt of bids. CPA reserves the right to hold such bids in effect for one hundred eighty (180) calendar days from the date of bid opening.

A DVD containing the Contract Documents including plans, specifications and the bid schedule, may be obtained at the CPA Accounting Office, 2nd floor of the Departure Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, upon the payment of TWO HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS (\$200.00) for each set of plans and documents in electronic form (DVD). The payment is nonrefundable unless this notice to bidders is cancelled. Payment shall be made in cash, credit card, cashier's check or U.S. postal money order, made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority. Bidders should notify CPA's point of contact mentioned below immediately if there are issues retrieving the files on the DVD and are to verify all information using the specification table of contents and the index of drawings.

A pre-bid conference will be held at CPA's Capt. George Fleming Memorial Building Conference Room at the Port of Saipan, located in Lower Base on the island of Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), at 10:00 A.M. (CHST), FRIDAY, MARCH 10, 2023, to explain and clarify any questions regarding this project. Attendance is not mandatory. A site visit will follow the pre-bid conference. Bidders are requested to minimize their company's attendees to ensure social distancing.

Questions should be submitted in writing to the CPA Executive Director's Office, 2nd floor of the Arrival Terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or emailed to Ms. Wendi L. Prater, Executive Assistant/Project Manager at wprater@cnmiports.com at least ten (10) days prior to the bid opening date; with the exception of extension requests which have no deadline. Responses to all questions and requests for information will be provided to all bidders who purchased a DVD and attended the pre-bid conference.

Bidders shall use the bid schedule form furnished by the Commonwealth Ports Authority on the DVD. Each bidder must also supply all supplemental information required in the specifications.

The contract period for construction of the project in its entirety shall be FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY (420) calendar days. Liquidated damages in the amount of FIVE HUNDRED U.S. DOLLARS PER CALENDAR DAY (\$500.00) shall be assessed the Contractor for each calendar day that the completion of the Project is delayed beyond the contract completion date without approved excuse.

The apparent low bidder will be subject to a thorough and comprehensive review of its qualifications and Bid Documents to ensure that they are "responsive and responsible." This review will include, but is not necessarily limited to previous project experience, financial capabilities, quality of equipment and personnel, and bonding and insurance. If the apparent low bidder is found not to be "responsive or responsible", their bid will be rejected and the next lowest bidder will be evaluated for qualifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority reserves the right to reject any or all bid proposals submitted for: (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Notice to Bidders; or (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding bid rejection or cancellation; (c) any calculation error made in the bid schedule or mis-enter of the quantity of line item; or (d) sufficient justification exists that awarding the project contract would not be in the best interest of CPA. CPA further reserves the right to waive any defects in said bids if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

Each bid shall be accompanied by either a bid bond by a U.S. Treasury listed or CPA approved surety company, a certified check, or a cashier's check in the amount not less than ten percent (10%) of the bid price. Checks shall be made payable to the Commonwealth Ports Authority.

All mechanics and laborers for this procurement project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate established by the CNMI or the U.S. Secretary of Labor, whichever is higher. A copy of the Department of the Federal Labor Wage Rate Determination is included in Section GP 70-26 of the specifications. The bidder shall take into account minimum wage increases that may be imposed in the CNMI over the life of the Contract and include associated costs in the bid proposal. The EEO requirements, labor provisions, and wage rates are included in the specifications.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority, in accordance with the provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (78 Stat. 252, 42 USC §§ 2000d to 2000d-4) and the Regulations, hereby notifies all bidders or offerors that it will affirmatively ensure that any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, disadvantaged business enterprises will be afforded full and fair opportunity to submit bids in response to this invitation and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of race, color, or national origin in consideration for an award.

By submitting a bid/proposal under this solicitation, the bidder or offeror certifies that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred or suspended by any Federal department or agency from participation in this transaction.

In addition to the above, all bidders shall comply with all local and Federal requirements under this procurement.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY:

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: March 20, 2023



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-048

Opening Date: March 13, 2023
Closing Date: UNTIL FILLED

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| POSITION TITLE: | Assistant Division Manager |
| DEPARTMENT: | Water & Wastewater Division |
| LOCATION: | Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA |
| ANNUAL SALARY: | \$45,326.00 to \$61,190.00 per annum, Exempt |
| CONTRACT: | Contracted |
| POSITION(S): | One (1) |

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the department.

Duties:

- Supervises staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations.
- Manages daily activities and maintenance of assigned utility service operations; oversees the scheduling, production, maintenance and/or provision of utility services to include water and/or power.
- Oversees utility service processes, procedures and techniques; monitors operations and material handling and addresses issues or potential hazards; ensures safety procedure compliance and enforces policies and procedures. Receives and responds to customer issues, complaints and/or emergency situations; troubleshoots and identifies issues; initiates responses, and implements resolutions.
- Prepares a variety of utility service operational status and budget reports; gathers and organizes data; prepares and provides informational and compliance reporting. Monitors and tracks assigned budget; reviews and inspects equipment and supply needs; orders and maintains adequate supply of required parts and materials.
- Responds to emergencies during and after normal business hours.
- Act as Drinking Water and Wastewater Division Manager in their absence.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: Completion of four (4) years of college, or its equivalent, with major work in engineering, or other field related to work with large-scale utilities, plus four (4) years of experience as a supervisor in direct charge of drinking water systems' production, treatment, and distribution, and/or wastewater collection and treatment plants utilizing activated sludge secondary treatment processes, including one (1) year of management experience including administration of budgets.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques; Water, wastewater and/or power supply, generation, distribution and/or maintenance principles (based on assignment); Basic engineering and construction principles (based on assignment); Mathematical concepts; Budgeting principles; Safety principles; and Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff; Managing operational and maintenance activities related to utility provision; Monitoring and overseeing processes to ensure safety and quality; Responding to customer issues or emergencies; Troubleshooting issues and implementing resolutions; Preparing status, compliance and budget reports; Monitoring budget and tracking expenditures; Monitoring and maintaining supply and equipment inventory; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; and Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing/Certification:

- Current CNMI driver's license or one from another U.S. jurisdiction

Ability to obtain within three (3) years of assignment and thereafter maintain during the course of employment:

- Level 3 certifications from a U.S. state, U.S. territory, U.S. commonwealth, or the District of Columbia in water treatment and water distribution.
- Level 3 certifications from a U.S. state, U.S. territory, U.S. commonwealth, or the District of Columbia in wastewater treatment and wastewater collection. Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Josten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

IPI 'adopts' San Antonio Beach



LEIGH GASES

From left, Department of Parks and Recreation director Mark Flores, Bureau of Environment and Coastal Quality solid waste specialist Solomon Castro, BECQ environmental specialist Michael Flores, former Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC chair Cui Lijie, Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho, Rep. Roman Benavente (Ind-Saipan), and a BECQ staff, pose for a photo after the Adopt-A-Place ceremony at San Antonio Beach yesterday afternoon.

By LEIGH GASES

leigh_gases@saipantribune.com

REPORTER

Despite the many challenges it faces, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) is stepping up and has "adopted" the San Antonio Beach as the site that it will maintain on Saipan.

In an "Adopt-a-Place" ceremony yesterday afternoon by the Saipan Mayor's Office at one of the beach's pavilions behind the Francisco M. Saiblan Middle School, former Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC chair Cui Lijie was presented a plaque of appreciation as she presented their plans for the beach.

Speaking through a translator, Cui said they will commit to cleaning up the beach areas/pavilions thrice a month. They have also donated some tables and chairs to the pavilion. She thanked everyone in attendance.

NAVY

From page 13

plex mixture of cement, silica sand, and a couple other ingredients," Reyes said. "It's not like you can just go and buy regular cement at the store. You have to attach the coral underwater; the properties for cement underwater aren't the same like on land."

UCT Two adjusted to these requirements easily. "Our previous team here, Construction Dive Detachment Alpha, did a fantastic job learning a new complex skill and we appreciate them taking on this challenge so we could make the necessary repairs," Nick added.

Reyes said the complexity of coordination on the project was challenging and enlightening.

"On the surface everything looks pretty simple, but it was a massive team

dance and said that she loves Saipan as it is "peaceful and beautiful" so she wants to give back to the community as it is her "second home." She hopes people will support them in this endeavor.

Saipan Mayor Ramon "RB" Camacho thanked IPI and Cui for stepping up despite what the company is facing. "She's not a stranger here on the island. Despite the casino issues here, it shows that she doesn't walk away from these problems. It shows that she cares for the community. ... That's one thing I recognize Ms. Cui, for her contribution in this community beach area. ... I'm not after anything from her, but when she showed an interest in this program, I welcomed her into my office."

Camacho added that with help from regulatory agencies such as the Bureau of

Environmental and Coastal Quality, they can determine what's feasible or not in IPI's maintenance plans for the beach/pavilions.

Rep. Roman Benavente (Ind-Saipan), whose office built the pavilion where the ceremony was held, said the area made a difference for the community after Super Typhoon Yutu, when people would go to the beach for fresh air.

He thanked Cui for adopting the beach and the area. "Whatever your communication with the mayor and all the agencies required to move ahead with whatever plans you have, I support you and the mayor, and we will work together as much as possible," he said.

Others in attendance were SMO staff, BECQ staff, and Department of Parks and Recreation director Mark Flores.

effort across all the federal agencies and the CNMI government agencies, and our partners," he said. "For me, the main takeaway from this whole experience is really making sure that the whole team and everyone's methodology is embraced."

With the harbor adequately repaired and protected from corrosion, there are talks of making future repairs to increase the capability of the port.

"UCT Two has a great appreciation to the people of Tinian for the opportunity to strengthen their harbor and would love for the opportunity to return to Tinian continue to make improvements," Nick said.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-049

Opening Date: March 13, 2023
Closing Date: March 27, 2023

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| POSITION TITLE: | Trades Technician |
| DEPARTMENT: | Water Division (Electrical Section) |
| LOCATION: | Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA |
| ANNUAL SALARY: | \$20,826.00 to \$28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt |
| CONTRACT: | Not Contracted |
| POSITION(S): | One (1) |

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the department.

Duties:

- Performs maintenance, operations, installations and/or repairs in assigned area of responsibility; provides technical guidance regarding assigned functions; and ensures quality service levels in accordance with proper procedures.
- Provides assistance in monitoring regulatory compliance.
- Operates specialized and heavy equipment; performs maintenance activities and skilled repairs to equipment, infrastructure and/or other items of assigned area of responsibility.
- Identifies issues and operational concerns; performs inspections; provides troubleshooting; evaluates corrective measures or options; recommends and implements solutions and corrective actions.
- Receives customer inquiries and trouble calls; responds to requests and provides information or status updates.
- Monitors inventory and supplies; maintains required supply levels; initiates requests for the replenishment of materials and supplies; cleans, organizes and maintains work and supply areas.
- Takes readings of equipment; maintains records, logs, orders and data; and prepares reports.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or General Education Diploma or Adult Basic Education Program and 4 years of experience related to area of assignment.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Performing skilled maintenance, operations and repair work in assigned area. Reviewing quality levels and providing technical guidance in assigned area; Operating specialized and heavy equipment; Monitoring equipment and making adjustments; Performing inspections and identifying issues; Troubleshooting issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Receiving requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Monitoring inventory and supplies; Initiating supply requests; Taking equipment readings and maintaining reading data; Preparing and updating activity logs and status reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing/Certification:

- Valid U.S. Driver's License with appropriate class;
- Trades Licenses and/or Certifications, based on assignment;
- Water/Wastewater Treatment and Distribution Certifications, based on assignment.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Josten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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Business

3D art gallery opens in San Jose

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

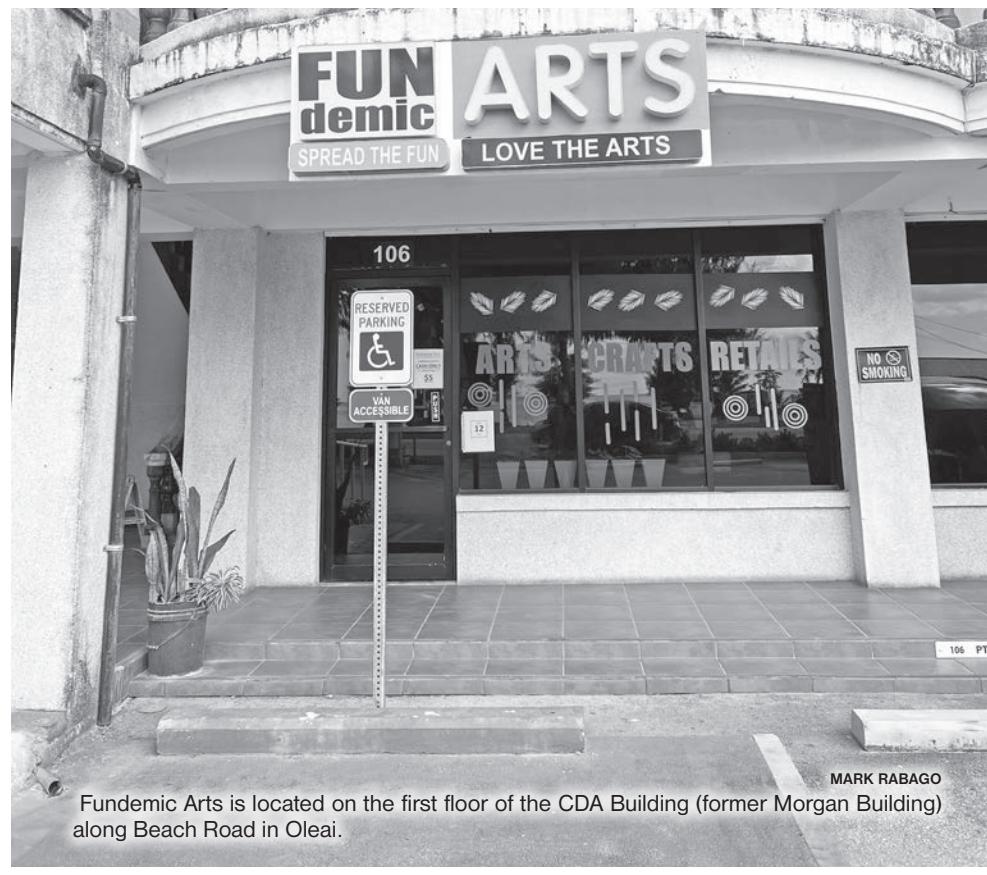
Saiyan folks now have a new place to enjoy the arts, amazingly be part of the painting/mural themselves, and overall create fun-filled memories with this month's opening of Fundemic Arts.

Owner Patrick Fielded said Fundemic Arts is a three-dimensional art gallery.

"It's an imaginative idea that when photographed from a certain angle, the optical illusion makes it seem like you're in the painting," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Fieldad said he opened Fundemic Arts last March 11 because he feels it's finally time to let the community know that there's a place to gather with family and friends and have fun.

"It's called Fundemic be-



Fundemic Arts currently has a \$5 promotion on its entrance fee for the entire month of March.



Fundemic Arts customers have fun posing in front of a giant painting of a shoe.

Bipartisan support emerges for Senate railroad safety bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—A bipartisan consensus that Congress should act to toughen regulations on railroads emerged Wednesday as senators heard fresh testimony on the fiery hazardous train derailment last month on the Ohio-Pennsylvania border.

Both Republicans and Democrats on the Senate Commerce Committee peppered Norfolk Southern CEO

Alan Shaw with questions about what enhanced safety measures he would support. At times they aggressively questioned the CEO of one of the nation's largest railroads on what could be done to prevent future derailments like the one that has upended life in the Ohio village of East Palestine.

Shaw offered support for some safety enhancements, including training for emergency response crews and phasing out older tank car models. But he

declined to endorse several key parts of the bipartisan Railway Safety Act of 2023, which is being championed by Ohio Sens. Sherrod Brown, a Democrat, and JD Vance, a Republican.

The bill includes requirements that trains have crews of at least two people, expands the classification for highly hazardous flammable trains and increases fines for safety violations.

Democratic Sen. Maria Cantwell, chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, said lawmakers have an opportunity to "use the horrible accident to really improve rail safety." She predicted a bill would advance to the Senate floor by April.

Cantwell added the bipartisan nature of the bill, as well as the committee's recent history of considering railway safety legislation, would make it possible for lawmakers to act quickly.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer is also behind

the Railway Safety Act. And in the House, a bipartisan group of Ohio lawmakers has also introduced a similar proposal, though top Republicans have also urged caution on enacting fresh regulations.

"It is an opportunity for real and meaningful bipartisan cooperation," said Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas, the committee's top Republican.

The East Palestine derailment has given rise to rare bipartisan cooperation in the closely-divided Senate. Democrats say they want to ensure profitable corporations like Norfolk Southern invest in safety standards and workforce before reaping profits. Republicans, at times urged by Vance to shift attention from the concerns of big business towards white, working-class communities like East Palestine, are looking to show they can deliver for an area they accuse the Biden administration of overlooking.

cause I wanted it to spread the fun and for people to love the arts. I wanted to create a family-friendly, fun environment where arts and the community of all ages can come together, take photos, and create memories and unforgettable bonding."

He said with COVID-19 restrictions finally lifted, it's about time for the local community and even tourists slowly coming back to the islands to experience a new type of activity.

"It offers a place for families, students, tourists, and our island community to enjoy local artwork and provide leisure activities to alleviate mental stress and increase overall well-being or just to have fun and create memories and bonding together."

The one-of-a-kind 3D artworks are created by Greg Bacnis and Ernie David, two renowned Filipino visual artists living on Saipan whose paintings have been featured on the Flame Tree Arts Festival and other competitions.

Fielded said Bacnis and Da-

Thai police bust call scammers who preyed on older Americans

BANGKOK (AP)—Thai police said Wednesday they busted an international gang that operated call centers to deceive older Americans into wiring them money, netting more than 3 billion baht (\$87 million).

Police said they arrested 21 suspects Tuesday after raiding nine locations in four Thai provinces, seizing 162 bank accounts, 61 mobile phones, two cars, one gun, and multiple real estate

vid haven't done 3D painting before, but because of their skill and patience, they were able to finish the paintings.

"My dad, Patricio, also helped me on the construction/renovation inside the unit," he said.

Fieldad said he got the idea of establishing Fundemic Arts during a recent visit to his parents' home country of the Philippines.

"When I went to the Philippines a couple of years ago, I went to a 3D gallery and said to myself that it will be cool and fun for families if Saipan has this back home to create a place for families, friends, and the community to bond together and create memories."

Since it's relatively new, Fieldad has been using word of mouth and the power of social media to promote his new business.

"We have been posting flyers and social media. I did have groups and friends who wanted to visit the place and hopefully, will grow. Some members of our island com-

munity supported Fundemic Arts by bringing their whole family to experience the first 3D gallery in the CNMI. With continued support, we hope to extend and provide more opportunities for our community and visitors to enjoy the arts."

Currently, they're having a \$5 promotion for the entrance for the whole month of March. Children 5 years old and below get to enter free.

Fundemic Arts' regular prices, which return on April 1, are \$7 for adults and \$5 for children (5 to 12 years old).

Fundemic Arts is located on the first floor of the CDA Building (former Morgan Building) along Beach Road in Oleai. It is open from Thursday to Friday, 6pm-8pm; Saturday, 10am-1pm and 3pm-6pm; and Sunday, 10am-6pm. Any changes to its business hours will be posted on their social media page. For more information, you can contact them at fundemicarts@gmail.com and by also visiting their Facebook page Fundemic Arts.

The scammers claimed to be law enforcement agents investigating money laundering and told victims their funds were suspicious so needed to be transferred to them to be verified, police said. In addition to that fairly common ruse, the suspects also hacked some victims' computers, they said.

The mostly elderly victims included doctors, professors, dentists, army personnel, and businesspeople, police said.

Nation

Iraq WMD failures shadow US intelligence 20 years later

WASHINGTON (AP)—In his U.S. Capitol office, Rep. Jason Crow keeps several war mementos. Sitting on a shelf are his military identification tags, the tailfins of a spent mortar and a piece of shrapnel stopped by his body armor.

Two decades ago, Crow was a 24-year-old platoon leader in the American invasion of Iraq. Platoon members carried gas masks and gear to wear over their uniforms to protect them from the chemical weapons the U.S. believed—wrongly—that Iraqi forces might use against them.

Today, Crow sits on committees that oversee the U.S. mil-

tary and intelligence agencies. The mistakes of Iraq are still fresh in his mind.

“It’s not hyperbole to say that it was a life-changing experience and a life frame through which I view a lot of my work,” the Colorado Democrat said.

The failures of the Iraq War deeply shaped American spy agencies and a generation of intelligence officers and lawmakers. They helped drive a major reorganization of the U.S. intelligence community, with the CIA losing its oversight role over other spy agencies, and reforms intended to allow analysts to better evaluate sources and challenge con-

clusions for possible bias.

But the ultimately incorrect assertions about Iraq’s nuclear, biological and chemical weapons programs, repeatedly cited to build support for the war in America and abroad, did lasting damage to the credibility of U.S. intelligence.

As many as 300,000 civilians died in two decades of conflict in Iraq, according to Brown University estimates. The U.S. lost 4,500 troops and spent an estimated \$2 trillion on the Iraq War and the ensuing campaign in both Iraq and Syria against the extremist Islamic State group, which took hold in both countries after the U.S. initially withdrew in 2011.

Those assertions also made “weapons of mass destruction” a catchphrase that’s still used by rivals and allies alike, including before the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which U.S. intelligence correctly forecast.

Avril Haines, the current U.S. director of national intelligence, noted in a statement that the intelligence community had adopted new standards for analysis and oversight.

“We learned critical lessons in the wake of our flawed assessment of an active WMD program in Iraq in 2002,” Haines said. “As in every part of our work, we strive to learn the lessons that allow us to preserve and advance our thinking

to greater effect in service of our national security.”

Only 18% of U.S. adults say they have a great deal of confidence in the government’s intelligence agencies, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. Forty-nine percent say they have “some” confidence and 31% have hardly any confidence.

Shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, President George W. Bush ordered an invasion of Afghanistan, where the ruling Taliban sheltered al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden and allowed the group to run training camps.

Bush’s administration soon

began to warn about Iraq, which was long seen as threatening American interests in the Middle East.

Iraq was known to have sought a nuclear weapon in the 1980s and had chemical and biological weapons programs by the end of the Gulf War in 1991. It had been accused of concealing details about those programs from international inspectors, before they were kicked out in 1998.

The Bush administration argued Saddam Hussein’s government was still hiding programs from inspectors after they reentered the country in 2002 and found no signs of resumed production.

House GOP demands info from former prosecutors in Trump case

“No authorities wanted to take the case but then what changed? President Trump announces he’s running for president and shazam,” Jordan told reporters Monday.

By effectively demanding transparency in the middle of a criminal investigation, House Republicans are using the power of their new majority to defend Trump—who is still seen as the leader of the party—as he mounts a second run for president.

The Manhattan grand jury appears close to finishing its work, after hearing last week from Trump’s former lawyer and fixer Michael Cohen, but the timing of a possible decision on whether to charge the ex-president remains uncertain. Prosecutors canceled a scheduled grand jury session Wednesday and it wasn’t clear if the panel would meet Thursday.

Biden approval dips near lowest point: AP-NORC poll

He said there were “pain points” caused by higher borrowing costs but that he thinks the process will “ultimately” lead to a healthier economy.

The president has taken ambitious steps to boost the U.S. economy, with his \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package from 2021, infrastructure investments, support for computer chip plants and taxes on corporations and the wealthy to help fund health care and a shift away from fossil fuels.

But those efforts involve multiyear investments that have yet to provide much optimism to a public dealing with annual inflation at 6%. The president and other administration officials have toured the country to promote their achievements. But to many, the economy feels as though it could be on a knife’s edge after the recent bank failures, as well as the debt limit showdown with House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., that could put the U.S. government at risk of defaulting.

CITY TRUST BANK 

VEHICLE FOR SALE

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Please contact City Trust Bank Loans Department at telephone numbers (670) 235-7701/02/04 for more details.

Bid forms are available at City Trust Bank, Middle Rd., Gualo Rai. Bids must be submitted in a sealed envelope and must be received by March 31, 2023 at 3:00 p.m. Winning bidder shall be notified in writing.

The Bank reserves the right to reject any or all offer.

 **Commonwealth Utilities Corporation**

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 23-054 Opening Date: March 20, 2023
Closing Date: April 03, 2023

The incumbent will be under the overall supervision of the Drinking Water & Wastewater Division Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of the Wastewater Division.

- The Trades Assistant assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities. Performing daily well and pump station facility maintenance, cleaning and monitoring;
- Assisting plumbing and chlorine maintenance crew;
- Utilizing digging equipment for locating and repairing leaks;
- Repairing and securing pressure reducer valves, main valves, service lines and laterals, and booster pumps;
- Assisting with meter installation and repair;
- Collecting water samples;
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing/Certification:

• Valid U.S. Driver’s License with appropriate class;

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131

CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Approval of President Joe Biden has dipped slightly since a month ago, nearing the lowest point of his presidency as his administration tries to project a sense of stability while confronting a pair of bank failures and inflation that remains stubbornly high.

That’s according to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, which shows there have been modest fluctuations in support for Biden over the past several months. The president notched an approval rating of 38% in the new poll, after 45% said they approved in February and 41% in January. His ratings hit their lowest point of his presidency last July, at 36%, as the full weight of rising gasoline, food and other costs began to hit U.S. households.

In recent months, approval of Biden had been hovering above 40%.

Interviews with poll respon-

 ACROSS THE NATION

Court: Arizona governor not required to carry out execution

PHOENIX (AP)—The Arizona Supreme Court has ruled that state law doesn't require Gov. Katie Hobbs to carry out the April 6 execution of a prisoner who was convicted of murder. The decision marks a legal victory for the newly elected Democratic governor whose office said the state isn't currently prepared to carry out the death penalty. The high court had set the April execution date for Aaron Gunches, who fatally shot Ted Price near Mesa, Arizona, in 2002. The order came

after Hobbs said executions will not be carried out until Arizonans can be confident that the state isn't violating constitutional rights when it enforces the death penalty. The governor vowed two weeks ago that she wouldn't carry out the court's order while the state reviews death penalty protocols that she ordered because of Arizona's history of mismanaging executions. Lawyers for Hobbs said the department lacks staff with proper expertise and does not have a current contract for a pharmacist to compound the pentobarbital needed for an execution. They also said corrections officials are unable to find

Arizona court declines most of Lake's appeal over gov's race

PHOENIX (AP)—The Arizona Supreme Court has declined to hear most of Republican Kari Lake's appeal in a challenge of her defeat in the governor's race but revived a claim that was dismissed by a trial court.

out the identity of the state's prior compounding pharmacist, who primarily had contact with an official no longer with the department. A top corrections leadership position critical to planning executions remains unfilled.

In an order Wednesday, the state's highest court said a lower court erroneously dismissed Lake's claim challenging the application of signature verification procedures on early ballots in Maricopa County. The court sent the claim back to a trial court to consider. Lake said late Wednesday that she's thrilled with the ruling. "The signature verification process in Maricopa County is a house of cards," Lake said in a statement. "Thanks to this ruling my team will get the chance to topple it." Lake, who lost to Democrat Katie Hobbs by just over 17,000 votes, was among the most vocal 2022 Republican candidates

promoting former President Donald Trump's election lies, which she made the centerpiece of her campaign. While most other election deniers around the country conceded after losing their races in November, Lake did not.

Arrest made in fire at planned Wyoming abortion clinic

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP)—A woman was arrested on charges of setting fire to a building in Wyoming that was being renovated to house the state's only full-service abortion clinic, authorities said Wednesday, hours after a judge temporarily

blocked a ban on abortion that went into effect a few days ago. Lorna Roxanne Green, 22, of Casper, was arrested on Tuesday by Casper police and agents from the FBI and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Wyoming U.S. Attorney Nicholas Vassallo said in a statement. Green faces up to 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine if convicted, according to the statement. She is scheduled to appear in federal court in Cheyenne on Thursday morning. The fire was set on May 25, 2022, at a stucco house in Casper, the state's second-largest city and the site of frequent anti-abortion protests.


United States Air Force Seeks Public Input for Cultural Resources Interpretive Plan


The U.S. Air Force (Air Force) is seeking public input regarding the preparation of a Cultural Resources Interpretive Plan for historic properties on Tinian. The Interpretive Plan is one of the Air Force's commitments in the Amendment to the Programmatic Agreement between the Air Force, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to resolve adverse effects on cultural resources that could result from the Divert Activities and Exercises (Divert) and the Tinian Divert Infrastructure Improvements (Pipeline) projects. The purpose of the Interpretive Plan is to provide the Air Force with a strategy to prepare educational and historical interpretation materials of historic properties in the Divert and Pipeline project areas for the public. The plan and interpretive materials would be developed by the U.S. Air Force, in coordination with the CNMI, with input from the public. These project areas include West Field (at the Tinian Airport), the Tinian Seaport, and areas between them.

In late 2017, the Air Force sought initial public input on a plan to interpret the World War II historic features of West Field based on the Divert project. Comments received from this solicitation expressed an interest in interpretive products for West Field that included other time periods and resources. The scope of the Interpretive Plan was expanded in the Amendment to the Programmatic Agreement to include cultural resources in both project areas and from all represented time periods. The Air Force is seeking public input in the development of this Plan.

The Interpretive Plan will discuss content and evaluate options for future educational interpretive products for cultural resources in the Divert and Pipeline project areas. Possible products include but are not limited to: signage at publicly accessible historic features, printed brochures, exhibits and/or displays, and electronic products. The Air Force respectfully requests public input on the format and content of interpretive products, including suggested answers to the following questions:

- Who should the interpretive products be for? Who should the intended audience(s) be?
- What are important historical topics and themes that should be addressed?
- Do you have any stories about the project areas or its historic resources?
- What format should interpretive products take?

The Air Force will consider the comments received during the preparation of the Interpretive Plan. Those who wish to provide input are encouraged to submit their comments by email to valerie.curtis.1@us.af.mil or by mail to:

Valerie Curtis
25 E St., Suite C-300
JBPHH, HI 96853-5427
ATTN: Air Force Interpretive Plan

To ensure the Air Force has sufficient time to consider public input in the interpretive planning process, please submit comments by Friday, April 14, 2023.

www.PACAFDivertMarianasEIS.com



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality
Division of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 501304, Saipan, MP 96950-1304
Tel: (670) 664-8500/01; Fax: (670) 664-8540
www.deq.gov.mp


PUBLIC NOTICE
REQUEST FOR WATER QUALITY CERTIFICATION

Pursuant to Section 401 of the federal Clean Water Act, activities that may result in a discharge to waters of the United States and require a federal permit or license also receive Water Quality Certification. In issuing a Water Quality Certification for a federal permit or license, BECQ must assure that the proposed activity complies with all applicable provisions of the CNMI Water Quality Standards, will not interfere with the attainment or maintenance of the existing or designated uses of the Commonwealth waters, and that all appropriate and practicable steps have been taken to minimize potential adverse impacts to aquatic life and human health. Further, the Antidegradation Policy of the Water Quality Standards of the CNMI states that the protection and maintenance of the quality of the waters of the Commonwealth are an historic and legal right of the people of the Northern Marianas Islands, and that this shall be the public policy of the Commonwealth.

Upon receiving a request for certification, BECQ issues a public notification which describes the proposed activity and potential impacts on water quality, aquatic life and human health. A thirty (30) day public comment period will commence on **THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2023**, and ends at **4:30 P.M. on FRIDAY, APRIL 14, 2023**.

The Administrator of BECQ may conduct a public hearing to solicit comments on the application if the hearing is requested by the public. BECQ will make a determination for issuing a Water Quality Certification based upon a complete technical review of the application and the public comments received.

BECQ is soliciting comments on the request for a CNMI Water Quality Certification.

1. APPLICANT INFORMATION:

CNMI Department of Public Works
Mr. Ray N. Yumul
Acting Secretary
PO Box 502802
Saipan, MP 96950

2. APPLICABLE STATUTORY AUTHORITY: CNMI Commonwealth Environmental Protection Act (Public Law No. 3-23); CNMI Water Quality Standards, NMIAC Chapter 65-130.

3. LOCATION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY: Sugar Dock, Susupe Lagoon, Saipan

4. DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTIVITY: The proposed activity is to demolish of Sugar Dock and excavation of base, rebuild Sugar Dock in the same footprint as the original dock using large inter-locking concrete blocks, construction of a sediment jetty to help minimize sand accretion at existing boat launching ramp and Sugar Dock structure, dredging of accreted sand immediately north of Sugar Dock; 3 feet mean high water line to create a new shoreline that will allow the existing boat launching ramp to become functional and a 10-year maintenance dredging authorization for the designated dredge area footprint. The project is being reviewed under US Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permits; therefore, it requires Water Quality Certification from BECQ in accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. US Army Corps of Engineers is currently reviewing the proposed activity under Nationwide Permit POH-2019-00074.

5. IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: The discharge for which a federal permit(s) is required, and therefore Water Quality Certification is required, is associated with dredge and fill of material within waters of the US. Specifically, material will be excavated during the proposed reconstruction of the dock and construction of the sediment jetty. Sediment excavated may be reused on site as fill material. Geotextile and rock will be installed on site to serve as the new revetment structure. The proposed project activities have the potential to discharge sediment and exceed CNMI Water Quality Standards for turbidity and Total Suspended Solids. These pollutants can have a negative impact on aquatic life including coral and seagrass.

6. PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES: During construction, the CNMI Department Public Works (DPW) will be subject to all applicable Best Management Practices and compliance with CNMI Water Quality Standards. DPW has developed a Water Quality Monitoring Plan to ensure that CNMI Water Quality standards will not be violated during construction. As part of the Water Quality Monitoring Plan, DPW and the construction contractor will generate baseline water quality data for turbidity and then assess water quality during construction activities.

Written comments should be submitted to DEQ within thirty (30) days of the date of publication of this notice. Please email comments to cnni.waterquality@gmail.com

Asia

China calls Xi's Russia visit one of friendship, peace

BEIJING (AP)—China on Wednesday said President Xi Jinping's just-concluded visit to Russia was a "journey of friendship, cooperation and peace," and again criticized Washington for providing military support to Ukraine.

The trip that ended Wednesday signaled no new progress in ending the bloody conflict between Russia and Ukraine

while shoring up President Vladimir Putin's standing amid growing efforts to isolate him and his government internationally.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin reiterated China's claims that it remains neutral in the conflict and said it had "no selfish motives on the Ukraine issue, has not stood idly by ... or taken the

opportunity to profit itself."

"What China has done boils down to one word, that is, to promote peace talks," Wang said at a daily briefing.

Wang also accused the U.S. of lacking impartiality and of "fanning the flames" of the conflict by providing defensive weapons to Ukraine to Washington's own benefit.

The U.S., NATO and partner nations have openly supported Kyiv since the start of the conflict, and China is widely seen as providing economic backing for Putin's regime while avoiding being directly involved.

"President Xi Jinping's visit to Russia is a journey of friendship, cooperation and peace, which has aroused positive responses in the international community," Wang said.

China would "continue to play a constructive role in promoting a political settlement of the Ukrainian issue," Wang said, an apparent reference to a

12-point peace proposal put forward by Beijing that calls for a cease-fire and negotiations.

The document has already been dismissed by the West, largely because China—which has said it has a "no-limits" relationship with Moscow—is not seen as an impartial broker and the proposal says nothing about a Russian withdrawal from Ukrainian territory it has occupied by force.

Xi's visit was heavily promoted by both China and Russia but was overshadowed by a visit to Kyiv by Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan, a close U.S. ally and a key Chinese rival in east Asia.

The U.S. and others have continued to express concerns that China may provide military equipment to supplement its purchases of Russian energy resources and provision of computer chips to keep the Russian economy afloat.

The New York Times on

Tuesday said Russia had purchased more than \$12 million in drones and drone parts from China in the year since the invasion began, citing official Russian customs data provided from a source it did not identify.

The paper said it was difficult to tell whether the drones contain American technologies. It said the shipments included products from DJI, which is among the world's leading makers of commercial drones, as well as smaller companies, and were often channeled through a web of brokers and smaller export firms.

In other comments on Ukraine, Wang said Russia and China agreed that the U.N. Charter must be observed and international law be respected. It said they opposed unilateral sanctions imposed by the U.S. and others to economically punish Putin and his financial backers.

Wang said nothing about

the arrest warrant issued for Putin by the International Criminal Court on charges of alleged involvement in abductions of thousands of children from Ukraine.

In a joint statement signed in Moscow, Russia and China emphasized the need to "respect legitimate security concerns of all countries" to settle the conflict, echoing Moscow's argument that it sent in troops to prevent the U.S. and its NATO allies from turning the country into an anti-Russian bulwark.

"The two sides pointed out that the solution to the Ukraine crisis must respect the legitimate security concerns of all countries and prevent the formation of bloc confrontation and fanning flames," Wang said Wednesday in Beijing.

"The two sides stressed that responsible dialogue is the best way to resolve the issue steadily," Wang said.

China, Philippines assess ties amid escalating sea disputes

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Senior Chinese and Filipino diplomats were meeting in Manila on Thursday to review their relations amid thorny issues, including Beijing's alarm over a Philippine decision to allow the U.S. military to expand its presence to a northern region facing the Taiwan Strait and escalating spats in the disputed South China Sea.

The back-to-back meetings are the first under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who took office in June last year. He met Chinese President Xi Jinping in a state visit to Beijing in January where both agreed to expand ties, pursue talks on potential joint oil and gas explorations and manage territorial disputes amicably.

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Sun Weidong and Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Theresa Lazaro were leading the talks aimed at assessing overall relations on Thursday. The discussions would focus on the long-seething territorial spats in the disputed waterway on Friday, the De-

partment of Foreign Affairs in Manila said.

The territorial conflicts have persisted as a major irritant in relations early in the six-year term of Marcos, whose administration has filed at least 77 of more than 200 diplomatic protests by the Philippines against China's increasingly assertive actions in the disputed waters

since last year alone.

That included a Feb. 6 incident when a Chinese coast guard ship aimed a military-grade laser that briefly blinded some crew members of a Philippine patrol vessel off a disputed shoal. Marcos summoned the Chinese ambassador to Manila to express concern over the incident, but Beijing said the Philippine vessel intruded into Chinese territorial waters and its coast guard used a harmless laser gadget to monitor the vessel's movement.

Early last month, the Marcos administration announced it would allow rotating batches of American forces to indefinitely station in four more Philippine military camps.

Those are in addition to five local bases earlier designated under a 2014 defense pact between the longtime treaty allies.

Marcos said Wednesday the four new military sites would include areas in the northern Philippines. That location has infuriated Chinese officials because it would provide U.S. forces a staging ground close to southern China and Taiwan.

The Americans would also have access to military areas on the western Philippine island province of Palawan, Marcos said, adding that the U.S. military presence under the 2014 Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement was aimed at boosting coastal defense.

S. Korean unification minister in Japan to discuss N. Korea

TOKYO (AP)—South Korea's unification minister and senior Japanese government officials reaffirmed their close cooperation in response to North Korea's escalating missile threats at a rare meeting on Thursday, a sign of a further thaw in relations that comes only a week after their leaders agreed to work past their troubled history and mend ties so they can better respond together to growing regional threats.

Kwon Youngse is in Tokyo for talks with Japanese ministers and top governing party officials, becoming the first unification minister to do so in 18 years. His trip comes on the heels of South Korean

President Yoon Suk Yeol's summit with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida last week, when they agreed to resume regular visits and launch high-level talks on security, trade and other issues.

Kwon and Japanese Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi agreed that North Korea's repeated ballistic missile firings, which have come at an unprecedented pace, are a "serious and pressing threat to regional security and a clear and grave challenge to international society," according to a Foreign Ministry statement.

The two ministers confirmed their close cooperation in response to North

Korea's nuclear and missile threats, the ministry said.

At the outset of the talks, Hayashi said last week's summit was "a great success" and praised Yoon's leadership toward improving bilateral relations. Hayashi also said he was "delighted to meet with Minister Kwon without delay."

Kwon, in response, said the process of improving ties has just begun and that he believes further efforts by the two governments can help bolster their healthy relations.

He said North Korea's nuclear and human rights issues represent a problem not only for South Korea but also for the international community.

He said it is also necessary for his country to strengthen ties with Japan to tackle those issues.

South Korea and Japan have deep economic and cultural ties and are both key U.S. allies. But their relations have often faltered due to disputes stemming from Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule of the Korean Peninsula.

After long negotiations with Japan, the South Korean government earlier this month announced plans to use local funds to resolve a compensation dispute over wartime Korean forced labor, leading to the first full summit between the two countries' leaders in 12 years.

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
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WEBSITE: WWW.CNMIIMPORTS.COM

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

TINIAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT BACKUP POWER SYSTEM UPGRADE
PROJECT NO. CPA-TA-002-23

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is a public corporation and autonomous agency of the Government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). In accordance with its Procurement Rules and Regulations, CPA is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested Consultants for Architectural and Engineering (A/E) Design Services for the upgrade of the airport's backup power system at the Tinian International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, Project No. CPA-TA-002-23.

The project is being funded by CPA and is in accordance and compliance with CPA's Procurement Rules and Regulations, Section 40-50-202, Architect-Engineer Design and Construction Management Services.

The Request for Qualification (RFQ) Package is available at CPA's Administration Office, 2nd floor of the arrival terminal at the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport. No fee is required for obtaining the proposal package. Electronic copies may be made available upon written request to Ms. Wendi Prater, CPA's Executive Assistant/Project Manager, at wprater@cnmimports.com or Ms. Sheri Llagas at receptionist@cnmimports.com.

Questions regarding this request for qualification statements must be submitted to Ms. Prater or hand delivered to the CPA Administration Office by no later than 5:00 p.m. CHST, Friday, April 21, 2023.

Interested Consultants are requested to submit one (1) original, four (4) copies and one (1) electronic version in .pdf of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **5:00 p.m. CHST, FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2023**. Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330. The statements of professional qualification will be evaluated based on the criteria provided in the RFQ package.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

/s/ CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

Date: March 20, 2023

NOTICE
of DEADLINE for COMMENTS

for Modernizing Grid Infrastructure Through Transformer Acquisition

(Thursday, March 23, 2023 - Saipan) — The Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) held a public hearing on **Monday, March 20, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. in the CUC Conference Room** for the Modernizing Grid Infrastructure through Transformers Acquisition Project. This project will be funded by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Interested parties may submit comments for this project to **Adrian Reyes, Project Manager**, at adrian.reyes@cucgov.org with the subject line titled, "Comments for Public Hearing: Modernizing Grid Infrastructure." The deadline to submit comments is by **4:30 p.m. on Monday, March 27, 2023**.

CUC would like to thank the community members who attended the public hearing on March 20, 2023, and for providing comments on this project.

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World

World Bank puts cost of rebuilding Ukraine at \$411 billion

WASHINGTON (AP)—A World Bank report released Wednesday puts the cost of Ukraine's recovery and rebuilding from Russia's invasion at \$411 billion over the next decade, with the cost of cleaning up the war rubble alone at \$5 billion.

The report details some of the toll of Russia's war in Ukraine: at least 9,655 civilians confirmed dead, including 461 children; nearly 2 million homes damaged; more than one out of five public health institutions damaged; and 650 ambulances damaged or looted.

In all, the World Bank calculated \$135 billion in direct damage to buildings and infrastructure so far, not counting broader economic damage.

The damage would be even worse if not for the strong defense mounted by the Ukrainian forces, Anna Bjerde, the World Bank vice president for Europe and Central Asia, noted in a call with reporters. She said the worst damage has been confined to the front-line regions of Donetsk, Kharkiv, Luhansk and



A residential multi-story building is seen damaged after a Russian missile hit it in southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine, Wednesday, March 22, 2023.

Kherson.

As it is, the World Bank said, Russia's invasion has undone 15 years of economic

progress in Ukraine, cutting

Ukraine's gross domestic product by 29% and pushing 1.7 million Ukrainians into

poverty.

The assessment was carried out by the government

of Ukraine, the World Bank Group, the European Commission and the United Nations.

African Union urges nearly \$90 million for its Somali force

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—The African Union appealed for nearly \$90 million Wednesday for its peacekeeping force in Somalia, which is providing support to its military forces battling al-Shabab extremists.

Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, the AU commissioner for political affairs, peace and security, told two reporters that the more than 19,600-strong AU force won't be able to function properly and help the Somalis unless that funding gap is filled.

A year ago, the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved a new African Union Transition Mission in Somalia, known as ATMIS, to support the Somalis until their forces take full responsibility for the country's security at the end of 2024.

If the AU force doesn't have the funds to operate effectively in the coming 21 months before the handover, Adeoye said, "it may mean that al-Shabab will eventually take over the responsibilities of a state in Somalia."

"The implications are huge," he said. "And we do not want the international community to lose focus or have diverted attention away from Somalia, because it's been on for almost two decades."

Adeoye said the current Somali government is doing what many in the past never did — launch a full-scale offensive against al-Shabab

"The West is supporting Ukraine in the fight for the protection of their sovereignty, but Ukrainians are doing the fight," Adeoye said. "So now the Somalis are doing the fighting, and we need to all encourage that fight by ensuring that the peace support operation of the African Union does not fail."

He said a lack of resources will affect the withdrawal date for the AU force, and he warned that an uncoordinated AU withdrawal would be worse than the chaotic withdrawal of U.S.-led NATO forces from Afghanistan in August 2021. He added that "it will affect the whole region."

Adeoye said everyone's assessment is that the Somali forces have "improved tremendously militarily" and on the political side, where they worked with the AU in supporting elections last year.

But Adeoye said al-Shabab has been in Somalia for almost 20 years and it is definitely trying to adapt to a more robust Somali security force.

"They are resilient, so we have to be above game, and that's why we are not just asking for resources to train, to pay troops," he said. "We're asking for resources for equipment as well—for the best state-of-the-art offensive weapons from the U.S., from those with the wherewithal to make an impact, and double-up what the Somali government is doing."

WORLD BRIEFS

Macron wants French pension plan implemented by end of year

PARIS (AP)—President Emmanuel Macron is stubbornly resisting growing discontent on the streets of France, saying on Wednesday that the pension bill he pushed through without a vote in parliament to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 must be implemented by the end of the year. After his interview broadcast on national television, critics attacked Macron, describing him as "self-satisfied," "out of touch" and "offensive." Some suggested that the president is playing with fire amid strikes and daily demonstrations, some leading to clashes with police. Unions have called for nationwide protests on Thursday that are likely to further raise tensions. "He is in absolute denial," said Olivier Faure, the head of the Socialist Party. It's as though "there's a well lit fire and he is pouring jerrycans of gas on the flames." The president's remarks Wednesday were his first since the government finally forced the pension bill through parliament last week, then survived two no-confidence votes in the lower chamber of parliament Monday. France's Constitutional Council will review the bill in

the coming weeks, and it can only be turned into law after the body gives its approval.

Netanyahu seeks to soothe US concerns over settlement repeal

JERUSALEM (AP)—Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to back down on Wednesday, saying his government has no intention of returning to four abandoned settlements in the occupied West Bank under a law that was repealed by parliament this week. His statement followed harsh U.S. criticism and an international uproar over Netanyahu's far-right government, the country's most hard-line ever, over the Knesset vote early Tuesday to revoke a 2005 law that dismantled the four settlements. The Biden administration summoned Israel's ambassador in Washington hours after the vote — a rare rebuke between the allies. Jordan's parliament, meanwhile, in a largely symbolic vote, approved the expulsion of Israel's envoy over the conduct of a firebrand minister. Netanyahu said the Knesset vote on Tuesday ended a period that discriminated against and humiliated Jews by not allowing them to live in "northern Samaria," using the biblical term for

tions. The findings are meant to guide planning for financing and carrying out what is an ongoing recovery effort in Ukraine.

The report said it was essential to keep Ukraine's government and private business and recovery efforts going even as bombs fall and fighting persists. Postponing rebuilding and support "risks settling into a situation of low or no growth and facing huge social challenges once the war ends," it said.

Ukraine's energy sector has seen the greatest surge in damage recently, as a result of Russia's targeted strikes on the electrical grid and other energy hubs during the winter. Total damage to the energy sector is now five times greater than it was last summer, the World Bank said.

Longer term, the officials estimated a cost in the trillions of dollars to Ukraine's economy just from the many ways the war has interrupted education. That includes the more than 2 million children estimated to have fled the country.

the West Bank. "That said," he said, "the government has no intention to build new settlements in these areas."

Brazil watchdog tells Bolsonaro to cede jewels from Saudis

SAO PAULO (AP)—A Brazilian government watchdog voted Wednesday to give former President Jair Bolsonaro five working days to return to authorities a set of jewels he received from Saudi Arabia in 2021. All nine members of the government watchdog voted in favor of requiring Bolsonaro to turn the jewels over to the state-owned Caixa Economica Federal bank in the capital city of Brasilia. The five days start counting as soon as Bolsonaro's lawyers are officially notified, which had not happened, according to the government watchdog. Another set of jewels from Saudi Arabia estimated to be worth several million dollars and also sent to Bolsonaro, according to one of his former ministers, was seized by customs at Sao Paulo's international airport. Bolsonaro, who has been in the United States since he left office in January, is under preliminary police investigations at home since Brazilian media started reporting on the jewels earlier this month.

Off The Wall

What made Beethoven sick? DNA from his hair offers clues

NEW YORK (AP)—Nearly

200 years after Ludwig van Beethoven's death, researchers pulled DNA from strands of his hair, searching for clues about the health problems and hearing loss that plagued him.

They weren't able to crack the case of the German composer's deafness or severe stomach ailments. But they did find a genetic risk for liver disease, plus a liver-damaging hepatitis B infection in the last

months of his life.

These factors, along with his chronic drinking, were probably enough to cause the liver failure that is widely believed to have killed him, according to a study published Wednesday in the journal *Current Biology*.

This Sunday marks the 196th anniversary of Beethoven's death in Vienna on March 26, 1827, at the age of 56. The composer himself

wrote that he wanted doctors to study his health problems after he died.

"With Beethoven in particular, it is the case that illnesses sometimes very much limited his creative work," said study author Axel Schmidt, a geneticist at University Hospital Bonn in Germany. "And for physicians, it has always been a mystery what was really behind it."

Since his death, scientists

have long tried to piece together Beethoven's medical history and have offered a variety of possible explanations for his many maladies.

Now, with advances in ancient DNA technology, researchers have been able to pull genetic clues from locks of Beethoven's hair that had been snipped off and preserved as keepsakes. They focused on five locks that are "almost certainly authentic,"



ANTHI TILIAKOU/AP

This photo provided by researchers in March 2023, shows the Stumpff Lock, from composer Ludwig van Beethoven, in a laboratory at the Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History in Germany.

coming from the same European male, according to the study.

They also looked at three other historical locks, but weren't able to confirm those were actually Beethoven's. Previous tests on one of those locks suggested Beethoven had lead poisoning, but researchers concluded that sample was actually from a woman.

After cleaning Beethoven's hair one strand at a time, scientists dissolved the pieces into a solution and fished out chunks of DNA, said study author Tristan James Alexander.

Man gets 4 1/2 years for role in \$8M online romance scam

BOSTON (AP)—A Massachusetts man convicted of helping steal millions of dollars from hundreds of people in online romance scams, often regaling the victims with stories of oil rig explosions and foreign jails, has been sentenced to 4 1/2 years in prison.

Kofi Osei, 30, and his alleged accomplices from 2016 to 2020 targeted mostly older people seeking companionship by creating fake online dating profiles, prosecutors said in a statement Tuesday.

They gradually gained their victims' trust before directing them to transfer money to one of dozens of bank accounts Osei opened using fake passports, aliases and phony business names, federal prosecutors said in a statement. Once the money was in the bank account, it was quickly withdrawn.

Some of the money was used to buy cars that were sent to Nigeria and sold, prosecutors said.

The scheme received more than \$8 million in proceeds, \$4 million of which went directly into accounts that Osei opened and controlled, prosecutors said.

Among the victims was a Florida woman who sent more

der Begg, a biological anthropologist at the University of Cambridge.

Getting genes out was a challenge, since DNA in hair gets chopped up into tiny fragments, explained author Johannes Krause, a paleogeneticist at Germany's Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology.

But eventually, after using up almost 10 feet (3 meters) of Beethoven's hair, they were able to piece together a genome that they could "quiz" for signs of genetic disease, Krause said.

than \$200,000 to accounts Osei controlled after being told that her online boyfriend needed funds to secure his release from custody following an explosion on his oil rig, according to court records.

Another victim from California sent \$65,000 to an account Osei controlled after being told the money was needed to support employees injured in an accident at the overseas worksite of her online boyfriend and to release him from jail, prosecutors said. The woman was "left financially and emotionally devastated," prosecutors said.

Osei was arrested in February 2021 and pleaded guilty in September to making a false statement to a bank, wire fraud and money laundering. He was also ordered to pay more than \$4 million in restitution and forfeiture.

Federal prosecutors had asked for a nine-year sentence.

Osei grew up in poverty in Ghana and came to the U.S. legally to pursue a professional soccer career, his attorney said in court documents. The defense sought leniency, saying Osei was remorseful and a loving father with no prior criminal history who made "a poor and misguided decision."

THIRD DEATH ANNIVERSARY

†Vicente (Ben) Cabrera Attao

JULY 19, 1952 - MARCH 26, 2020

Life & Style

Sotheby's hopes for record sale of ancient Hebrew Bible

JERUSALEM (AP)—One of the oldest surviving biblical manuscripts, a nearly complete 1,100-year-old Hebrew Bible, could soon be yours—for a cool \$30 million.

The Codex Sassoon, a leather-bound, handwritten parchment tome containing almost the entirety of the Hebrew Bible, is set to go on the block at Sotheby's in New York in May. Its anticipated sale speaks to the still bullish market for art, antiquities and ancient manuscripts even in a worldwide bear economy.

Sotheby's is drumming up interest in hopes of enticing institutions and collectors to bite. It has put the price tag at an eye-watering \$30 million to \$50 million.

On Wednesday, Tel Aviv's ANU Museum of the Jewish People opened a week-long exhibition of the manuscript, part of a whirlwind worldwide tour of the artifact in the United Kingdom, Israel and the United States before its expected sale, on Wednesday.

"There are three ancient Hebrew Bibles from this period," said Yosef Ofer, a professor of Bible studies at Israel's Bar Ilan University: the Codex Sassoon and Aleppo Codex from the 10th century, and the Leningrad Codex, from the early 11th century.

Only the Dead Sea Scrolls and a handful of fragmentary early medieval texts are older, and "an entire Hebrew Bible is relatively rare," he said.

Starting a few centuries before the Codex Sassoon's creation, Jewish scholars known as Masoretes started codifying oral traditions of how to prop-



ARIEL SCHALIT/AP

The Codex Sassoon 1,100-year-old Hebrew Bible is on display at the Tel Aviv's ANU Museum of the Jewish People for a weeklong exhibition of the manuscript, part of a whirlwind worldwide tour of the artifact in the United Kingdom, Israel and the United States before its expected sale, Israel, Wednesday, March 22, 2023.

erly spell, pronounce, punctuate and chant the words of Judaism's holiest book. Unlike Torah scrolls, where the Hebrew letters are devoid of vowels and punctuation, these manuscripts contained extensive annotation instructing readers how to recite the words correctly.

Precisely where and when the Codex Sassoon was made remains uncertain. Sharon Liberman Mintz, a senior Judaica specialist at Sotheby's, said that radiocarbon dating of the parchment gave an estimated date of 880 to 960. The codex's writing style suggests its creator was an unspecified early 10th-century

scribe in Egypt or the Levant. "It's like the emergence of the biblical text as we know it today," Mintz said. "It's so foundational not only for Judaism, but also for world culture."

Though it's certainly ancient and rare, scholars say the Codex Sassoon doesn't match the pedigree and quality of its contemporary—the Aleppo Codex.

"Any Masoretic scholar in their right mind would take the Aleppo Codex over the Sassoon Codex, without any regret or hesitation," said Kim Phillips, a Bible expert at the Cambridge University Library. He said the scribal quality was

"surprisingly sloppy" compared to its counterpart.

The Aleppo Codex, dated to around 930, has been considered the gold standard of the Masoretic Bibles for around 1,000 years. The Codex Sassoon's margins contain an annotation from a later scholar who says he checked its text against the Aleppo Codex—referring to the manuscript by the Arabic title a-Taj, "the Crown."

"The Aleppo Codex is more precise than the Sassoon Codex, there's no doubt," Ofer said. "But because it's missing (a third of its pages), in those parts that are absent, there is great

significance to this manuscript." The Codex Sassoon's 792 pages make up around 92% of the Hebrew Bible.

These venerable manuscripts were protected and treasured by Syrian Jewish communities for centuries until the 20th century. How the Sassoon Codex survived the ages is an epic in its own right.

A note on the manuscript attest to its owners in centuries past: A man named Khalaf ben Abraham gave it to Isaac ben Ezekiel al-Attar, who gave it to his sons Ezekiel and Maimon.

It later migrated east to the

town of Makisin in what's today northeast Syria, where it was dedicated to a synagogue in the 13th century. Sometime in the following decades, the synagogue was destroyed and the codex entrusted to Salama ibn Abi al-Fakhr until the synagogue was rebuilt.

It never was rebuilt, but the book survived.

Its whereabouts for the next 500 years remain uncertain until it resurfaced in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1929, and was bought by a legendary collector of Jewish manuscripts whose name it still bears.

David Solomon Sassoon was a Bombay-born son of an Iraqi Jewish business magnate who filled his London home with a massive collection of Jewish manuscripts.

"His capacity was astounding, both in terms of number but also in terms of what he was able to find," said Raquel Ukeles, head of collections at Israel's National Library.

Sassoon roved across Europe, the Middle East and North Africa buying up old books, and by his death in 1942, he had amassed over 1,200 manuscripts.

Sassoon's estate was broken up after he died and the codex was sold by Sotheby's in Zurich in 1978 to the British Rail Pension Fund, which had started investing in art several years earlier, for around \$320,000.

The pension fund flipped the Codex Sassoon 11 years later for 10 times its hammer price. Jacqui Safra, a banker and art collector, bought it in 1989 for \$3.19 million and is now putting it up for auction.

Friend with benefits still benefiting after engagement

DEAR ABBY: I lost my husband of 20 years a little over two years ago. Last year, I moved to another state to be close to family. I rented an apartment, and my best friend moved with me. Shortly after, I met a much younger man. He was immediately interested in me. He's sweet, kind and very handsome. It took me months to realize that I'm also interested in him.

We began spending time together, including bedroom fun. He has told me at least twice he loves me, and I told him the same. His demeanor and expressions match his words, and we agreed for the time being to be friends with benefits.

Three months ago, he met someone much closer to his age. But even in front of her he holds me close and tells me he loves me. She has now slapped a ring on his finger and is pushing him for marriage. He keeps saying he's not ready. We feel that until the day he says "I do," it's OK for us to continue our bedroom fun. I'm new to the dating world, and he's my first since my husband passed. Am I doing the right thing?

LOVING THE FUN IN WASHINGTON

DEAR LOVING: It is extremely difficult to hit a moving target. No one "slaps a ring" on another person's finger unless that person holds still for it. You are NOT doing the right thing by continuing to sleep with this man. In

fact, you may be heading for a painful fall. When he marries his fiancee, you will be history once she realizes you are more than a good friend he "loves" but also a former bed partner.

■■■■

DEAR ABBY: Our family has a thrilling story in its history about our grandfather and his brothers rescuing the family's player piano from their burning house. The house burned to the ground, and they lost nearly everything but the piano, which is now shuffled among family members' homes.

It's not particularly attractive, and it's certainly not playable even as a regular piano. It's one of the cheap, mass-produced, no-name models that were popular in the 1920s. There are relatives who are desperate to keep it in the family, but who don't have the space to store it or the money to refurbish it.

I'm not sentimental. If it were dumped on me, I'd throw it out. I told them they should take lots of photos of it and get rid of it. If some family members rescued a giant TV set from a fire, it wouldn't make sense to keep it around for 100 years.

I'm sure they enjoyed the player piano as a source of entertainment in its time, but that time has passed. My question is, how do you get people to let go of material possessions that have become a huge burden?

UNFINISHED SONG IN NEW JERSEY

DEAR ABBY

BY ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

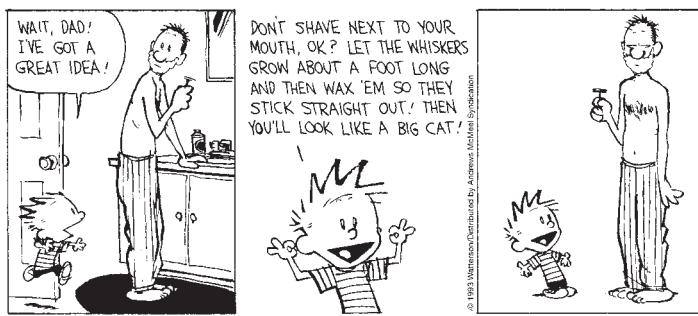
DEAR UNFINISHED: You stated that if someone gave you that old piano, you would junk it. If someone wants to give it a home, that is where it should go. I'm having trouble understanding why the fate of that instrument is your problem. Make it clear to your relatives that you want nothing to do with that piece of furniture and let it go.

■■■■

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

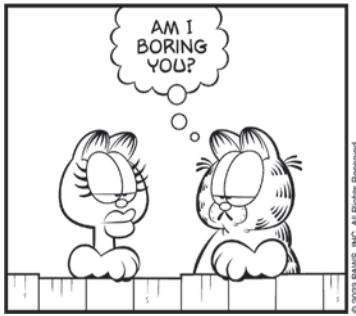
Calvin and Hobbes



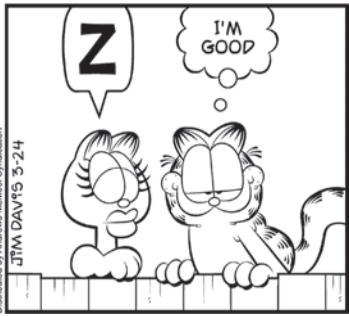
By Bill Watterson



Garfield®



By Jim Davis

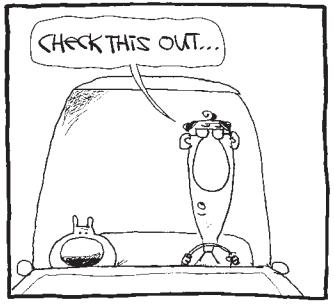


Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

| ACROSS | 36 | Choir | 2 | Lawyers' members | 21 | Jai — gp. | 22 | Exceed | 23 | Wan | 25 | Fore-shadow | 26 | Sea-plane parts | 27 | Toledo's state | ADAM. |
|--------|-------------------------|-------|----------------|------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|--------|--------------------------|-----|-------------|-------------|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|----------------|-------|
| 1 | Scoundrel | 37 | Molecule | 3 | Pond | 24 | youngster | 25 | Fore-shadow | 4 | Conceals | 26 | Sea-plane parts | 27 | Toledo's state | ADAM. | |
| 4 | Mata — | 40 | Nile | 5 | Acknowl-edge | 28 | Speed-wagon | 29 | Although he has survived | 6 | Speed-wagon | 30 | Young-sters | 31 | Katy for this long. | ADAM. | |
| 8 | Converse | 41 | Actress Rogers | 7 | Leb. | 32 | Leb. | 33 | KATY FOR THIS LONG. | 8 | Long | 34 | Earth's neighbor | 35 | ADAM. | ADAM. | |
| 12 | — Dhabi | 42 | Hounds | 9 | neighbor | 36 | Speed-wagon | 37 | ADAM. | 10 | Unwanted | 38 | Slugger Aaron | 39 | Spotted tile | ADAM. | |
| 13 | Currier's partner | 43 | Algerian port | 11 | Boxing stats | 40 | Unwanted | 41 | ADAM. | 12 | breakout | 42 | "Citizen Kane" prop | 43 | "Citizen Kane" prop | ADAM. | |
| 14 | Cabbie | 44 | La Scala solo | 13 | Yaks | 44 | Boxing stats | 45 | ADAM. | 14 | hero | 46 | Actors Robert and Alan | 47 | Actors Robert and Alan | ADAM. | |
| 15 | Exit to a yard, perhaps | 45 | "The Matrix" | 15 | Gender | 48 | Yaks | 49 | ADAM. | 16 | hero | 50 | Fords | 51 | Fords | ADAM. | |
| 17 | Part of A.D. | 46 | Rogers | 51 | Gender | 50 | Leg joint | 51 | ADAM. | 17 | breakout | 52 | Super-model Veronica | 53 | Super-model Veronica | ADAM. | |
| 18 | Recognized | 47 | Hounds | 52 | Gender | 52 | Leg joint | 53 | ADAM. | 18 | hero | 54 | Latin love | 55 | Latin love | ADAM. | |
| 19 | Fancies | 48 | Algerian port | 53 | Gender | 53 | Leg joint | 54 | ADAM. | 19 | breakout | 55 | Love energy | 56 | Love energy | ADAM. | |
| 20 | Cardiff's country | 49 | La Scala solo | 54 | Gender | 54 | Leg joint | 55 | ADAM. | 20 | hero | 56 | Muscat's land | 57 | Muscat's land | ADAM. | |
| 22 | Feedbag filler | 50 | "The Matrix" | 55 | Gender | 55 | Leg joint | 56 | ADAM. | 21 | breakout | 57 | First bed | 58 | First bed | ADAM. | |
| 24 | Writer Wiesel | 51 | Rogers | 56 | Gender | 56 | Leg joint | 57 | ADAM. | 22 | hero | 58 | Purse | 59 | Purse | ADAM. | |
| 25 | End of the line | 52 | Hounds | 57 | Gender | 57 | Leg joint | 58 | ADAM. | 23 | breakout | 59 | 401(k) | 60 | 401(k) | ADAM. | |
| 29 | Prohibit | 53 | Algerian port | 58 | Gender | 58 | Leg joint | 59 | ADAM. | 24 | hero | 60 | alter-native | 61 | alter-native | ADAM. | |
| 30 | Fluttery insects | 54 | La Scala solo | 59 | Gender | 59 | Leg joint | 60 | ADAM. | 25 | breakout | 61 | "My word!" | 62 | "My word!" | ADAM. | |
| 31 | Discoverer's call | 55 | "The Matrix" | 60 | Gender | 60 | Leg joint | 61 | ADAM. | 26 | hero | 62 | Boston team, for short | 63 | Boston team, for short | ADAM. | |
| 32 | 1999 | 56 | Rogers | 61 | Gender | 61 | Leg joint | 62 | ADAM. | 27 | breakout | 63 | Latin love | 64 | Latin love | ADAM. | |
| 33 | Adam Sandler film | 57 | Hounds | 62 | Gender | 62 | Leg joint | 63 | ADAM. | 28 | hero | 64 | Love energy | 65 | Love energy | ADAM. | |
| 34 | Peevish fit | 58 | Algerian port | 63 | Gender | 63 | Leg joint | 64 | ADAM. | 29 | breakout | 65 | Muscat's land | 66 | Muscat's land | ADAM. | |
| 35 | Twistable cookie | 59 | La Scala solo | 64 | Gender | 64 | Leg joint | 65 | ADAM. | 30 | hero | 66 | First bed | 67 | First bed | ADAM. | |
| | | 60 | "The Matrix" | 65 | Gender | 65 | Leg joint | 66 | ADAM. | 31 | breakout | 67 | Purse | 68 | Purse | ADAM. | |
| | | 61 | Rogers | 66 | Gender | 66 | Leg joint | 67 | ADAM. | 32 | hero | 68 | 401(k) | 69 | 401(k) | ADAM. | |
| | | 62 | Hounds | 67 | Gender | 67 | Leg joint | 68 | ADAM. | 33 | breakout | 69 | alter-native | 70 | alter-native | ADAM. | |
| | | 63 | Algerian port | 68 | Gender | 68 | Leg joint | 69 | ADAM. | 34 | hero | 70 | "My word!" | 71 | "My word!" | ADAM. | |
| | | 64 | La Scala solo | 69 | Gender | 69 | Leg joint | 70 | ADAM. | 35 | breakout | 71 | Boston team, for short | 72 | Boston team, for short | ADAM. | |
| | | 65 | "The Matrix" | 70 | Gender | 70 | Leg joint | 71 | ADAM. | 36 | hero | 72 | Latin love | 73 | Latin love | ADAM. | |
| | | 66 | Rogers | 71 | Gender | 71 | Leg joint | 72 | ADAM. | 37 | breakout | 73 | Love energy | 74 | Love energy | ADAM. | |
| | | 67 | Hounds | 72 | Gender | 72 | Leg joint | 73 | ADAM. | 38 | hero | 74 | Muscat's land | 75 | Muscat's land | ADAM. | |
| | | 68 | Algerian port | 73 | Gender | 73 | Leg joint | 74 | ADAM. | 39 | breakout | 75 | First bed | 76 | First bed | ADAM. | |
| | | 69 | La Scala solo | 74 | Gender | 74 | Leg joint | 75 | ADAM. | 40 | hero | 76 | Purse | 77 | Purse | ADAM. | |
| | | 70 | "The Matrix" | 75 | Gender | 75 | Leg joint | 76 | ADAM. | 41 | breakout | 77 | 401(k) | 78 | 401(k) | ADAM. | |
| | | 71 | Rogers | 76 | Gender | 76 | Leg joint | 77 | ADAM. | 42 | hero | 78 | alter-native | 79 | alter-native | ADAM. | |
| | | 72 | Hounds | 77 | Gender | 77 | Leg joint | 78 | ADAM. | 43 | breakout | 79 | "My word!" | 80 | "My word!" | ADAM. | |
| | | 73 | Algerian port | 78 | Gender | 78 | Leg joint | 79 | ADAM. | 44 | hero | 80 | Boston team, for short | 81 | Boston team, for short | ADAM. | |
| | | 74 | La Scala solo | 79 | Gender | 79 | Leg joint | 80 | ADAM. | 45 | breakout | 81 | Latin love | 82 | Latin love | ADAM. | |
| | | 75 | "The Matrix" | 80 | Gender | 80 | Leg joint | 81 | ADAM. | 46 | hero | 82 | Love energy | 83 | Love energy | ADAM. | |
| | | 76 | Rogers | 81 | Gender | 81 | Leg joint | 82 | ADAM. | 47 | breakout | 83 | Muscat's land | 84 | Muscat's land | ADAM. | |
| | | 77 | Hounds | 82 | Gender | 82 | Leg joint | 83 | ADAM. | 48 | hero | 84 | First bed | 85 | First bed | ADAM. | |
| | | 78 | Algerian port | 83 | Gender | 83 | Leg joint | 84 | ADAM. | 49 | breakout | 85 | Purse | 86 | Purse | ADAM. | |
| | | 79 | La Scala solo | 84 | Gender | 84 | Leg joint | 85 | ADAM. | | | 86 | 401(k) | 87 | 401(k) | ADAM. | |
| | | 80 | "The Matrix" | 85 | Gender | 85 | Leg joint | 86 | ADAM. | | | 87 | "My word!" | 88 | "My word!" | ADAM. | |
| | | 81 | Rogers | 86 | Gender | 86 | Leg joint | 87 | ADAM. | | | 88 | Boston team, for short | 89 | Boston team, for short | ADAM. | |
| | | 82 | Hounds | 87 | Gender | 87 | Leg joint | 88 | ADAM. | | | 89 | Latin love | 90 | Latin love | ADAM. | |
| | | 83 | Algerian port | 88 | Gender | 88 | Leg joint | 89 | ADAM. | | | 90 | Love energy | 91 | Love energy | ADAM. | |
| | | 84 | La Scala solo | 89 | Gender | 89 | Leg joint | 90 | ADAM. | | | 91 | Muscat's land | 92 | Muscat's land | ADAM. | |
| | | 85 | "The Matrix" | 90 | Gender | 90 | Leg joint | 91 | ADAM. | | | 92 | First bed | 93 | First bed | ADAM. | |
| | | 86 | Rogers | 91 | Gender | 91 | Leg joint | 92 | ADAM. | | | 93 | Purse | 94 | Purse | ADAM. | |
| | | 87 | Hounds | 92 | Gender | 92 | Leg joint | 93 | ADAM. | | | 94 | 401(k) | 95 | 401(k) | ADAM. | |
| | | 88 | Algerian port | 93 | Gender | 93 | Leg joint | 94 | ADAM. | | | 95 | "My word!" | 96 | "My word!" | ADAM. | |
| | | 89 | La Scala solo | 94 | Gender | 94 | Leg joint | 95 | ADAM. | | | 96 | Boston team, for short | 97 | Boston team, for short | ADAM. | |
| | | 90 | "The Matrix" | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Morant returns, Jackson helps Grizzlies clinch division



MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP)—Ja Morant had 17 points and five assists in his return from an NBA suspension, and Jaren Jackson Jr. finished with a season-high 37 points and 10 rebounds as the Memphis Grizzlies beat the Houston Rockets 130-125 on Wednesday night.

Desmond Bane had 20 points and Tyus Jones scored 14 for the Grizzlies, with each adding seven assists. Memphis clinched the Southwest Division title for a second consecutive season.

Jalen Green had 32 points to lead the Rockets, while Kenyon Martin Jr. scored 31. Kevin Porter had his second career triple-double and first of the season with 14 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists. Alperen Sengun scored 25 for Houston.

Morant, who did not start, was back in action after missing nine games—eight because of a league-imposed suspension after a live stream from a Denver-area strip club earlier this month showed Morant briefly waving a firearm. Morant underwent counseling at a Florida facility for stress relief during the ban.

The two-time All-Star guard, who entered with 3:05 left in the first quarter, ended up playing 24 minutes and shot 6 for 13 overall. He also had four rebounds.

WARRIORS 127, MAVERICKS 125

DALLAS (AP)—Stephen Curry scored 20 points and assisted on Draymond Green's tiebreaking three-point play late, and Golden State beat Dallas in a game with considerable playoff implications.

Luka Doncic had 30 points after missing five games with a left thigh strain, but the Mavericks dropped below .500 as they try to stay out of the Western Conference play-in tournament a year after losing to the Warriors in the West finals.

The Mavericks were without All-Star guard Kyrie Irving because of right foot soreness and fell 1 1/2 games behind the Warriors, who clinched the tie-breaker by winning the season series 2-1.

Jonathan Kuminga scored 22 points on 9-of-11 shooting off the bench for Golden State, including a soaring, one-handed dunk during a tense fourth quarter.

Two nights after ending an 11-game road losing streak with a victory in Houston, the Warriors made it consecutive road wins for the first time since the NBA Finals last June.

HEAT 127, KNICKS 120

MIAMI (AP)—Jimmy Butler had 35 points, Tyler Herro scored 14 of his 22 in the

fourth quarter and Miami moved closer to avoiding the play-in tournament by beating New York.

Herro made four 3-pointers in the fourth for the Heat, who led by 11 in the third, lost the lead briefly, then took it back for good with a 16-2 run midway through the final quarter.

Herro and Max Strus each had a pair of 3s during the clinching run for Miami (40-34), which is just percentage points behind Brooklyn (39-33) in the race for the sixth and final guaranteed playoff spot in the Eastern Conference.

The Nets visit the Heat on Saturday.

It was the 700th career win for Miami coach Erik Spoelstra.

New York's Julius Randle, coming off a 57-point effort Monday against Minnesota, was held to 15. RJ Barrett scored 26 for the Knicks, who also got 25 from Jalen Brunson.

BUCKS 130, SPURS 94

MILWAUKEE (AP)—Giannis Antetokounmpo had 31 points and 14 rebounds in just 24 minutes as NBA-leading Milwaukee rolled against San Antonio.

The Bucks extended their Eastern Conference advantage to 2 1/2 games over Boston as they prepare for a four-game road swing that includes a matchup Saturday with the Western Conference-leading Denver Nuggets.

Antetokounmpo rested the entire fourth quarter and watched the Bucks put the finishing touches on their most lopsided win of the season.

Bobby Portis and Khris Middleton added 19 points each for the Bucks, who never trailed. Middleton also had 10 assists, while Portis had 10 rebounds.

Devin Vassell scored 16 to lead the Spurs.

76ERS 116, BULLS 91

CHICAGO (AP)—Tyrese Maxey scored 16 of his 21 points during Philadelphia's dominant first half against Chicago.

De'Anthony Melton had 25 points and Tobias Harris finished with 20 as the 76ers earned a split of the four-game season series. Joel Embiid added 12 points, seven rebounds and seven assists in just more than 16 minutes of playing time.

The Sixers (49-23) pulled within a half-game of idle Boston for second in the Eastern Conference behind Milwaukee (52-20).

Philadelphia had won eight in a row before Monday night's double-overtime loss to Chicago. But the 76ers jumped all over the Bulls in the rematch, opening a four-game road trip



Memphis Grizzlies guard Ja Morant (12) handles the ball against Houston Rockets guard Kevin Porter Jr. (3) in the second half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, March 22, 2023, in Memphis, Tenn. AP

with an efficient offensive performance.

Playing without James Harden and Jalen McDaniels because of injuries, the Sixers started the game with a 23-1 run.

Coby White scored 19 points for the Bulls. DeMar DeRozan had just four on 0-for-7 shooting.

LAKERS 122, JAZZ 111

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Anthony Davis had 27 points and nine rebounds, D'Angelo Russell added 26 points and Los Angeles snapped a six-game losing streak against Phoenix with a victory over the depleted Suns.

Austin Reaves had 25 points and a career-high 11 assists after moving into the starting lineup for the Lakers, who improved to 7-5 in LeBron James' latest injury absence with an impressive second half against the powerhouse Suns.

Devin Booker scored 25 of his 33 points in the second half for Phoenix, which has lost five of six. Chris Paul had 18

points for the Suns, who hadn't lost to the Lakers since May 2021.

Kevin Durant missed his seventh straight game for Phoenix with an ankle injury, and Deandre Ayton also didn't make the trip to Los Angeles while sitting out his second game with a hip injury.

NUGGETS 118, WIZARDS 104

WASHINGTON (AP)—Nikola Jokic had 31 points and 12 rebounds as Denver shook off a slow start and beat short-handed Washington.

Michael Porter Jr. added 21 points and Jamal Murray had 17 for the Western Conference leaders.

The Nuggets went 15 for 32 from 3-point range and finished 3-2 on their longest road trip of the season.

Kristaps Porzingis scored 25 points for the Wizards, who were without three-time All-Star guard Bradley Beal due to left knee soreness. Washington lost its fourth straight.

Devin Booker scored 25 of his 33 points in the second half for Phoenix, which has lost five of six. Chris Paul had 18

TRAIL BLAZERS 127, JAZZ 115

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Damian Lillard scored 30 points, rookie Shaedon Sharpe had a career-high 24 and Portland topped Utah to stop a six-game losing streak.

Trendon Watford added a season-best 21 points for the Trail Blazers. Portland used a 9-0 run, sparked by Kevin Knox III's alley-oop layup midway through the fourth quarter, to pull away.

Lauri Markkanen had 40 points and 12 rebounds for the Jazz, who had won four of five.

The Trail Blazers (32-40) are three games behind Utah for 10th place in the Western Conference and the final spot in the play-in tournament.

TIMBERWOLVES 125, HAWKS 124

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Karl-Anthony Towns scored 22 points in his long-awaited return from a strained right calf and Minnesota rallied past Atlanta.

Naz Reid added 26 points

Michael Jordan considering sale of Hornets; no deal imminent

By STEVE REED

AP Sports Writer

Michael Jordan is considering selling the Charlotte Hornets.

The six-time NBA champion is in negotiations to sell at least a portion of the franchise to a group that includes Hornets minority owner Gabe Plotkin.

"Four years ago, Michael Jordan sold a stake in the Charlotte Hornets to a Gabe Plotkin-led group," Jump Management, which is Michael Jordan's family office, said in a statement to The Associated Press on Wednesday. "As a natural step in a process due to that transaction, Michael and Gabe are in discussions about his group potentially buying an additional stake."

No deal is imminent.

"At this time, it is unclear whether an additional sale will take place," the statement read.

Jordan declined interview requests to discuss the potential sale of the team through his spokesperson, Estee Portnoy.

In 2019, Jordan sold a portion of the Hornets to Plotkin, a founder of Melvin Capital, and Daniel Sundheim of DI Capital, but Jordan still controlled the majority of the team's equity.

It's unclear at this point if Jordan is looking to sell his entire majority stake in the team, or just a portion of it.

Jordan is the NBA's only Black owner. He purchased the expansion team from Bob Johnson for \$180 million in 2010. The team had a net worth of \$1.7 billion after the 2021-22

season, according to Forbes.

Jordan experienced plenty of success as an NBA player, leading the Chicago Bulls to three-peat championships twice while being named an NBA All-Star 14 times. He also has had success with his Jordan Brand line of merchandise and has a current net worth of \$2 billion, per Forbes.

But the 60-year-old Jordan hasn't had much success as an NBA owner.

Since 2010, the Hornets are 419-595 and they will miss the playoffs this season for the seventh straight year. The Hornets have reached the playoffs only twice in 13 seasons under Jordan and have never advanced to the second round.

The Hornets are listed as the

off the bench and Jaden McDaniels had 25 for the Timberwolves, who trailed by 10 with 7:18 remaining but used a 19-5 run to get back in the game.

Atlanta led 124-123 with 50.5 seconds left after a pair of free throws by Trae Young. Towns then hit two free throws with 3.6 seconds left to win it. He was back after missing 51 games for Minnesota, which had lost three of four and slid to ninth in the Western Conference.

Rudy Gobert added 12 points and 12 rebounds for the Timberwolves.

Young scored 29 points for the Hawks, who were missing second-leading scorer Dejounte Murray (illness) in the second game of a back-to-back.

PACERS 118, RAPTORS 114

TORONTO (AP)—Rookie guard Andrew Nembhard had 25 points and 10 assists in his first NBA game back home in Canada, and Indiana beat Toronto to snap its home winning streak at seven.

Myles Turner scored 16 points, Benedict Mathurin added 15 and Buddy Hield had 13 for the Pacers, who swept the three-game season series between the teams.

Canadian-born players Mathurin, Nembhard and Oshae Brissett all started for Indiana as the Raptors celebrated Canada Basketball Night. It was the first time since the NBA began tracking starters in 1970-71 that three Canadians started for the same team.

Pascal Siakam scored 18 of his 31 points in the fourth quarter but the short-handed Raptors lost their second straight. Siakam also had 10 rebounds and seven assists.

Fred VanVleet had 28 points and 11 assists for Toronto.

Michael Jordan considering sale of Hornets; no deal imminent

27th-most valuable NBA franchise in the 30-team league.

But franchises are a hot commodity.

Mat Ishbia, a mortgage executive, agreed to purchase the majority stake of the Phoenix Suns and WNBA's Phoenix Mercury from embattled owner Robert Sarver for \$4 billion in December. The league approved the sale last month.

And Joe Tsai, the co-founder of Alibaba, agreed in 2019 to buy the remaining 51% of the Brooklyn Nets and Barclays Center for about \$3.4 billion. Tsai had previously purchased 49% of the team from Russian billionaire Mikhail Prokhorov in 2018, with the option to become controlling owner in 2021.

World Baseball Classic keeps growing despite injury risks



M I A M I
(AP)—Shohei Ohtani's strikeout of Mike Trout, Trea Turner's go-ahead, eighth-inning grand slam against Venezuela, Japan's walk-off semifinal win and Mexico's comeback from a four-run deficit against Puerto Rico will be replayed over and over.

Edwin Díaz's season-ending knee injury and Jose Altuve's broken thumb will be discussed all year, too.

This year's World Baseball Classic left lasting memories, 47 games over two weeks that restored Japan's supremacy and reinforced Ohtani's unmatched ability while expanding the sport's global footprint.

While not an international fixation like soccer's World Cup, the event has grown though its five editions since launching in 2006.

"This is kind of our Olympics. We don't get that opportunity to really play wherever the Olympics are at," Kyle Schwarber said before the Americans lost to Japan 3-2 in Tuesday night's final, when Ohtani fanned Trout to seal Japan's first title since 2009 and third overall. Baseball is no longer a permanent Olympic sport, and Samurai Japan beat a U.S. team stocked with minor leaguers for gold when baseball was temporarily restored at the previous Games.

Played in Miami, Phoenix, Tokyo and Taiwan, the star-studded WBC will finish with revenue of \$90 million to \$100 million, Major League Baseball said. Attendance of 1,306,414 was the tournament's highest, 20% over the 1,086,720 for 40 games in 2017.

The championship game on FS1, Fox Deportes and Fox Sports streaming services was the most-watched WBC game ever in the United States, up 69% from the 2017 final with



Japan players celebrate after defeating the United States in the World Baseball Classic championship game, Tuesday, March 21, 2023, in Miami. AP

a combined audience of 5.2 million viewers. A peak combined average audience of 6.5 million viewers tuned in for the dramatic ending.

This year's semifinals on FS1 and Fox Deportes averaged 2.4 million viewers, up 96% from the semis in 2017, when the tournament was televised by MLB Network and ESPN Deportes.

"One of the things that was really important this time around was Fox stepping up to broadcast the games," baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said. "Nobody's a bigger fan of the MLB Network than I am, but when you have one of the major broadcasters step up and want the event, that's a huge deal."

Concerns about player health have followed the tourney since its inception. Many MLB teams blocked

pitchers from participating, wanting them to concentrate on preparing for the start of the season. Injuries to Díaz and Altuve reinforced those concerns.

But with MLB generating revenue and global interest from the tourney, and players eager to represent their home countries, the injury risks seem unlikely to slow the WBC's growth.

"We all care for each other and no one wants to get hurt," Francisco Lindor, Díaz's teammate on Team Puerto Rico and the New York Mets, told reporters Tuesday. "But we all love our countries and want to represent our countries. ... We have an opportunity to represent our countries and learn from our peers. It's amazing."

Japan drew three of the four most-watched WBC games

ever back home going into the championship game, getting a 48.7 rating for the quarterfinal against Italy, 44.4 for the first-round game against South Korea and a 42.5 for the semifinal vs. Mexico. The figures represent the percentage of television households tuned to a telecast.

The team's victory sparked a nationwide celebration back home. The country's top circulating newspaper, Yomiuri, rolled out a special Wednesday afternoon edition for commuters, usually reserved for serious matters of state, late-breaking election news, or as it was last year—the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. "Japan, the World's No. 1," the headline read in Japanese.

Mexico anticipated its run to the last four will increase attention to the sport in a nation

where soccer dominates.

"These two weeks are going to attract so many young players in Mexico and also Mexicans that live abroad," manager Benji Gil said.

Following an expansion from 16 nations to 20, Britain, the Czech Republic and Nicaragua reached the tournament for the first time. All failed to advance past the group phase.

China and Israel twice had games cut short by the mercy rule, and Britain and Canada one each.

Group A was so competitive that all five nations finished 2-2, resulting in Cuba and Italy advancing over the Netherlands, Taiwan and Panama via a mathematical tiebreaker: runs allowed divided by outs.

"Obviously, a lot of countries are getting better at the game of baseball," U.S. manager Mark DeRosa said.

"I thought Colombia, man, the arms they were running out there, they weren't name guys, but everyone was sitting 92 to 95 (mph) and had pretty decent stuff."

Nicaraguan pitcher Duque Hebert even managed to turn one memorable inning into a pro contract, signing a minor league deal with the Detroit Tigers after striking out All-Stars Juan Soto, Julio Rodríguez and Rafael Devers.

MLB and the players' association have committed to the next WBC in March 2026. Manfred said it is too early to determine whether there will be tweaks to the format.

"I think that the combination of nationalism and sport is really, really powerful," he said, "and if you have an opportunity to participate in an event that combines the two, you have to take it."

ever made," said Lars Nootbaar, the St. Louis Cardinals outfielder who was the first to play for Japan by ancestry. He spoke in a television interview after the game, and then hugged his mother, Kumiko, who was standing alongside.

"Nippon daisuki," Nootbaar said in Japanese. "Arigato."

"I love Japan. Thank you."

Nootbaar, Ohtani, pitcher Yu Darvish, and manager Hideki Kuriyama were among those tossed into the air by celebrating teammates.

"That's the first time I've ever been lifted up like that before," Nootbaar said. "I hope I got a picture of it because that's something that I want to remember forever."

Japanese beating Americans in baseball is must-see viewing

commuters, usually reserved for serious matters of state, late-breaking election news, or as it was last year—the assassination of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

"Japan, the World's No. 1," the headline read in Japanese, with commuters at Shibuya station pushing and shoving to grab the collector's item.

The victory and the focus on Ohtani for the past two weeks provided a distraction from economic malaise, missile threats from North Korea, and China's rise across Asia and its implications for Japan.

It also gave a boost in Japan to baseball, which has been

challenged by soccer as the country's favorite sport. Japan is unlikely in the short-term to win soccer's World Cup, but its baseball is world class. It has won three of the five WBC titles, dating to the first event in 2006.

Japan joined the Dominican Republic in 2013 as the only unbeaten champions of baseball's premier national team tournament.

"I was OK with either losing or winning," said Hiroya Kuroda, a 44-year-old in a crowd of about 400 watching the game in a studio at Tokyo Tower. "But I was very moved by the fact that they showed us

a dramatic game on that stage in the United States."

Toshiya Ishii, a 29-year-old fan, broke down crying at the victory.

"Thank you Ohtani," he said. "Congratulations Samurai Japan. Thank you."

Reports in Japan say Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, just back from Ukraine and talks with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, is to meet with the Japanese team when it returns to Tokyo.

"The semifinal against Mexico and the final against the United States were both very close games, but Samurai Japan fought together as

one to clinch the victories," Kishida said on Twitter. "That encouraged me enormously."

Kishida is a former high school player and a big fan of his hometown team, the Hiroshima Carp.

Japan beat the Americans at their own game, and it wasn't the first time.

American teachers and missionaries popularized the game in Japan in the 1870s and 1880s, but it was a game in 1896 in Yokohama between Americans and Japanese that Japan won 29-4 that helped baseball take root in the country.

"The greatest decision I

STAG hosts first airsoft shooting comp

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Saipan Tactical Airsoft Group held this year's first Airsoft Shooting Competition last Sunday at the abandoned La Fiesta Mall in San Roque from 9:30am to 2pm.

More than 20 players participated while families and friends of the participants supported and watched. Food, cheers, stories, and laughter were shared among the attendees.

Nineteen players joined



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Daren Alviz, right, topped Saipan Tactical Airsoft Group's Airsoft Shooting Competition Rifle Category last Sunday at the La Fiesta Mall.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Jershwin Angeles, right, came in third in Saipan Tactical Airsoft Group's Airsoft Shooting Competition Rifle Category last Sunday at the La Fiesta Mall.

(31.20); third was Daren Alviz (37.00); Jerry Larioza was fourth (49.00); and fifth was Luis Camacho Jr. (49.98 secs.)

In the Rifle Category, out of 19 entries Daren Alviz was first (1:50.76); second was Rogel Caruana (1:55.43); third was Jersh Angeles (2:01.80); fourth was Jayson Bravo (2:02.65); and fifth was Michael Umali (2:14.97)

STAG president Erick Acesor would like to thank all players that participated in the competition and encourages individuals to try playing airsoft at the game site in La Fiesta Mall every Sunday from 9am to 2pm.

STAG members are willing to lend their rifles and gear with the first timers to experience the fun and excitement of playing Airsoft. Acesor would also like to appreciate all the sponsors that made this event possible: Micronesia Renewable Energy, Inc. CNMI, Pena House Boutique and Salon, Fishing Tackle, Marianas Arsenal, Tech Plus, Cups & Rolls, Pest Busters T&A Corp., and FAT Sports NMI.

Five players with the shortest and best time advanced to the final round. Monetary (from entry pot money) and gift certificates from sponsors were the prizes.

In the Pistol Category, out of nine entries Rodel Quindoza won first place with 30.06 seconds; second was Rogel Caruana

the Rifle Category, while nine players joined the Pistol Category with different kinds of challenging targets—metal plates, hanging drink cans, cardboard targets—at different distances and at different locations in the mall.

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In the Pistol Category, out of nine entries Rodel Quindoza won first place with 30.06 seconds; second was Rogel Caruana

Second CHCC Happy Hearts 5K today



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In this file photo, runners of the inaugural CHCC Happy Hearts 5K pose at the start/finish line at the Garapan Fishing Base.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Health-care Corp. Sunshine Squad and Run Saipan presents the second Happy Hearts 5K Fun Run & Walk today at 5:30pm.

With the race just before sunset, Run Saipan president Edward Dela Cruz Jr. said he expects a good

amount of people to join. "It's one of the few sunset runs we have scheduled in the year. Dr. [Jenna] Kong wanted her race to be a sunset run since the majority of our races are Saturday mornings. Friday was also the day she always wanted the CHCC 5K to be placed on so people can look forward to

sleeping in Saturday morning," he said. The course starts from the Garapan Fishing Base to just past the Japanese Tank Memorial along Quartermaster Road and back. Dela Cruz said, "We held it there last year and will do so again this year. When we don't have a crazy race format

planned our go to flat 5K route is Garapan Fishing Base."

The inaugural race last year was topped by Kosuke Sato in the men's division in a solid time of 20:05. Among the women, Ayano Braxton was the fastest with a time of 23:58.

To register or for more information, click the link <https://raceroster.com/events/2023/70405/chcc-happy-hearts-5k-23>.

Little League meeting on April 1



Saipan Little League Baseball, Inc. vice president A.J. Murig is calling all managers, coaches,

volunteers, parents, and interested individuals to attend a general membership meeting on April 1 at the Minachom Attdao Pavilion, 10am. (PR)

SEEDED

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vious round.

In the boys 12, Haoyang Song upset No. 1 Jinho Cody Park, 2-6, 6-3, 13-11, to reach the quarterfinals. In the lower bracket, second seed Michael Jeon disposed of Matt Zhu, 6-3, 6-2, to also reach the Final Four. The quarterfinals cast also includes Seungwoo Lee and Daniel Kang.

Top seed Vivian Chung won her debut in the girls 12 following her 6-1, 7-5 victory over Jenna Pascual, who redeemed herself with a 6-1, 6-0 win over Selina Chi. Also winning her first

game in the division is No. 2 Emma Lang, who beat Chi, 6-0, 6-0.

In the mixed doubles 12, Michael Jeon and Vivian Chung beat Park and Pascual, 3-6, 6-3, 10-6. Haoyang Song and Lang also beat Park and Pascual, 6-3, 6-7(5), 10-8.

Top seed Nason Wessel is in the quarterfinals of the boys 14 and is joined by second seed Siwoo Lee and fourth seed Ian Chae. Third seed Taher Shakir, however, was upset by Ryan Choi, 0-6 1-6, in the previous round.

In the girls 14, Lina Tsukagoshi won her first match against Sarah Lim via walk-

over before turning back Junho Amy Park, 6-1, 6-2. Stella Choi also beat Lim, 6-0, 6-0, and Park, 6-2, 6-3.

Top seed June Yu will face Siwoo Lee for all the marbles in the boys 16 after defeating Simon Tang, 7-6 (4), 6-3, in the semis. Lee advanced with a 7-5, 6-1 win over No. 2 Henry Choi.

In the girls 16, No. 1 seed Hoo Wang advanced to the finals after downing Hannah Chae, 6-1, 6-3. Also championship-round bound is Irin Chung after shocking No. 2 Anne Lee, 7-5, 6-2.

Siblings Jun and Hoo Wang justified their top ranking in the mixed 18 after beating Cody Shimizu and

Irin Chung, 7-5, 6-4. Also posting a win was another brother-sister pair as David and Anna Kwon won over No. 2 seeds Simon Tang and Elliott, 4-6, 6-3, 10-7.

In the men's singles 40, Paul Jang and Edwin Simbulan won their first games after beating Gary Ramsey, 6-1, 6-0, and John Bradley, 7-5, 6-2, respectively.

Daniel Kang zoomed to a 2-0 start in the men's 3.0 following wins over Haoyang Song, 5-7, 6-2, 13-11, and Chris Zhu, 3-6, 6-4, 10-6. Matt Zhu also joined the winner's circle with a 6-3, 1-6, 10-4 victory over Chris Zhu. Song also beat Chris Zhu, 6-3, 6-4.

In the women's 3.0, Stella Choi and Jin Hua will contest the championship after the Top 2 seeds vanquished separate opponents in the semis. The former beat Isa Nishitani, 6-1, 6-1, while the latter defeated Mei Rengiil, 6-4, 7-5.

Mae Kim and Jocelyn Panno debuted with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Sadako Ariola and Yuko Kumada in the women's doubles 3.0.

In the men's singles 3.0, Cody Shimizu, Ian Chae, Quintin Ramsey, and Dev Bachani all made it to the quarterfinals, while Bong Gamab and Ed Javier defeated Dev Bachani and Eamon Tang, 6-1, 6-2, in the lone game so far in the men's doubles 4.0.

The Northern Mariana Islands Tennis Association-organized tourney continues this weekend.

Flores after flipping the former's scores on Day 1 and Day 2, but lost via scorecard tiebreaker.

In the C Flight, Nicolas Leon Guerrero won with a two-round score of 173 (88-85) with Kwan Joong Kim (175, 84-91) and James Lin 175 (84-91) coming in second and third, respectively. Kim took the runner-up plum via another scorecard tiebreaker.

Like winners in the Championship Flight, A Flight, B Flight, and Ladies Flight, winners of the Seniors Flight and C Flight won \$500 for first place, \$300 for second place, and \$200 for third place.

MIGHTY

From Page 28

modates them when a Saipan team plays in Tinian.

The SVSA is a new volleyball organization that aims to have frequent volleyball tournaments throughout the year. SVSA board president Je-

rome Manzon, a 16-year-old sophomore and volleyball player at Marianas High School, said that it was a crazy idea to start the organization. "I've noticed that there was only one main organizer here, which was Agape but it's usually only during Christmas. I wanted

more volleyball players to be able to play throughout the year, so I said someone needs to step up."

As to why they named their organization SVSA, he said that "this is a service organization. We wanted to give service to Agape on making stats—basically keeping track

of each player's scores or whatever it is."

He said that they will start a new league after this tournament. "We have many plans for this year but our main one is probably this summer or summer 2024 to have our very first NMI Volleyball Cup League."

because I never played there before and not knowing the distance is always hard."

Castro dedicated his Senior

Flight win to his wife, Claire,

and their grandchildren.

"It's also not as hot here com-

pared to Guam. I think I will

come home to Guam a little bit

whiter," he joked.

Federico Flores came in sec-

ond with a total of 154, built

around an 80 on the first day

and a 74 on the second day.

Joseph Sasamoto actually tied

NMA announces age group winners of Women's 10K

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

 The Northern Marianas Athletics 3rd Annual Women's 10K Run 2023 in celebration of International Women's Month held last Saturday.

Along with the top finisher of the 10K, seven women topped seven age categories and were presented with giveaways from sponsor Michelob Ultra at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field on Tuesday.

Tiana Cabrera was the fleetest afoot in the 18-and-under age group with a time of 49:07; Dixie Mendenhall was the fastest in the open category at 49:02; Robyn Spaeth won the 35-39 age group at 53:06; Kathleen Tolentino topped the 40-44 at 1:00:26; Rosemarie Fontanilla Chisato topped the 45-49 at 53:30; Jessica Ortiz was first in the 50-54 category at 57:52; and Marie Sablan topped the 60-64 age division at 1:27:14.

For Cabrera, she said she beat her time last year by a couple of minutes and said that it was the weather that helped improve her time and that she's proud of her progress.

She added, "seeing all these women run is very empowering and motivating... With all these improvement times,



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The top runners in their age group of the Northern Marianas Athletics 3rd Annual Women's 10K Run 2023 pose for a photo with their giveaways and Run Saipan members on Tuesday at the Oleai Sports Complex track and field.

I want to thank my coaches [Dr.] Ron Snyder and Edward Dela Cruz Jr. They have pushed me a lot especially in practices and the best thing about the practices is there are always people with me so that really helps me to have fun and also push my limits. I also want to thank Run Saipan. I am so glad Saipan has gotten more into running and having so many races, it really shows how great and amazing the community is. Lastly, I want to thank my parents and friends for always cheering me up and supporting me through my obstacles really means a lot."

For Chisato, she said that joining the race is a privilege

because she gets to share the same passion with the strong women of Saipan. The course wasn't that difficult "because I trained well before the race, but still I didn't expect that I would win because my main goal is to enjoy the run and finish the race. I feel so

proud that at my age, I am able to run 10K and win in my age category."

Spaeth, whose daughter LoVel also ran in the 5K course, said that she was happy with her time. "I turned 40 the next day so it was my last run in my 30s

and my best 10K time yet! It gives me hope and motivation to keep moving. An added bonus was my 8-year-old daughter, LoVel ran in the 5K and was cheering me on. This is my first time being able to participate in the Women's Run and I was not

Krishnan is February SGA Ace

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Das Krishnan won the Saipan Golfers Association March Ace of the Month Tournament last Feb. 12 at the Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo.

The 67-year-old Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan Banquets and Events director finished with a net 70 after a gross of 82. The 12-handicapper shot a 42 in the first nine holes and 40 in the last nine.



Krishnan

"I just played it cool and took it easy only playing the course and not the players. It was a fine day and also the wind conditions were favorable for me that day," he added.

In the closest to the pin competition, Ben Aldan took the plum in hole No. 6; Sablan was without peer in hole No. 8, while Krishnan won in hole No. 12.

Patrick Cepeda and Rick Kautz topped the longest drive in holes No. 2 and 18, respectively.

Krishnan now joins SGA 2023 January Ace of the Month Ray Salas for the club's season-ending Ace of Aces Tournament.

John Matsumoto actually finished tied with Krishnan after also netting a 70 built on a 95 gross (48-47). Completing the Top 3 was Frances Sanlan with his 71 net (100 gross, 45-55).

Krishnan dedicated his win to close friends and golf buddies Steve Balakrishna and Nick Sablan.

"They are always there for me when I am up or down in life," he said.

His secret to winning the



By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Maribel Igitol and Vicente "Beng" Palacios were very greedy in the first quarter of the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race.

This, after Igitol and Palacios swept all three races with perfect scores in the Mama Class and Novice Class, respectively, of the Marianas Racing Association-organization competition.

Igitol again won both heats last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track to fend off challenges from second place Merissa Rasa (44 points) and third place Mar Castro (40 points).

The 37-year-old Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School teacher said racing in the newest MRA division gave her the opportunity to spread her wings in the sport.

Igitol then thanked her family for always supporting her

"This is my third season, so I got many opportunities to work on my technique and skills on the track, but of course, there's still so much room for improvement. In



my first season in 2020, I rode with in the Minis II division then moved on to the Novice Class in 2021 and when the Mamas division opened up this year, I decided to ride with the other 'Mamas.' So I got to experience riding with many other riders over the years."

As for the track conditions during the race, Igitol said it was unusually hot and dry.

"The track was dusty as usual but the track was nice and smooth. Thank you to MRA for always making the track smooth and safe for the riders," she said.

Igitol then thanked her family for always supporting her

motocross hobby.

"They're my support system and motivation," she said, while also extending her special thanks to Sgt. Ivan M. Igitol.

Palacios, meanwhile, has garnered a total of 150 points as he's about to exhaust his eligibility in the beginners division with perfect scores in the first three iterations of the series.

The 14-year-old DanDan Middle School student won both heats last Sunday to beat Christian Camacho and Matthew Guerrero who settled for second and third place with 44 points and 36 points, respectively.

"I am getting faster and that's the goal. I just have to keep pushing myself to ride my 100% limit. The track was good and the weather, but the track got a little slippery from

disappointed. We had a great group of women, cheering and pushing each other on. Shawna Brennfleck, with the help of the creative Kathy Ruszala, organized headbands in support of the AMPLIFY Organization, a non-profit organization that seeks to address issues of domestic violence and sexual assault in the NMI. Overall, I am thankful for the experience and very appreciative to the organizers of the event!"

Dr. Lily Muldoon, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. Medical director of Public Health, clocked in the fastest again out of 40 women for a three-peat with a time of 43:34, which is now the course record to beat.

NMA thanks the sponsors, donors, and partners of the event which are Marpac Michelob Ultra, Run Saipan, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Department of Public Safety, Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services, Triple J Inc. Saipan, IT&E, and volunteers.

all the loose dirt but I just rode my race and rode like it was practice," said Palacios, who dedicated his March victory to his family, his racing team, and sponsors.

In the Veterans Class, Dave Celis again stamped his class with another perfect 50 points, joining Igitol and Palacios with 150 points through the January-March races of the MRA circuit.

Justis "Cuki" Alvarez and Champi Villacanas complete the Top 3 with 44 points and 40 points, respectively.

Bentley Koshiro, meanwhile, was the lone racer in the Peewee I Class and bagged 50 points.

In the Mini ATV Class, Franchesca Yumul ruled the roost with 47 points, followed by Kimason Cabrera and Anella Igitol with 45 points and 22 points, respectively.



Maribel Igitol, left, and Vicente "Beng" Palacios in action in the Mamas Class and Novice Class of the 2023 Monster Energy Point Series Race last Sunday at the Cowtown Race Track.

TISHA FERRER



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Classic keeps
growing despite
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NMA announces
age group winners
of Women's 10K

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Seeded players ran amok in Week 1

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The usual suspects advanced to the final rounds of the 2023 Bridge Capital Tennis Classic last weekend at the American Memorial Park tennis courts.

In the men's open, top seed Colin Ramsey is safely into the semifinals after turning back a spirited challenge from June Yu, 6-2, 2-6, 10-7.

Second seed Tomas Abel had a relatively easier time making the semifinals after beating Paul Jang in straight sets, 6-4, 6-3.

Fourth seed David Kwon didn't break a sweat to make the Final Four after a walkover win over A.J. Jones. The other semifinals slot is still being contested by third seed Jonny Jackson and CNMI Sports Hall of Fame inductee and national coach Jeff Race.

In the women's open, No.

1 seed Hye Jin Elliott has won her first two matches after beating Hannah Chae, 6-2, 6-2, and Anne Lee, 6-3, 6-0. Chae, meanwhile, upset Serin Chung, 6-4, 6-2.

Ramsey then teamed up with brother Quentin and the duo reached the men's doubles finals after disposing of second seeds Henry Choi and June Yu, 6-1, 6-0.

Their uphill climb continues in the finals where they will face top seeds Abel and Race, who are coming off a 6-2, 6-2 win over Simon Tang and Nason Wessel in the pre-

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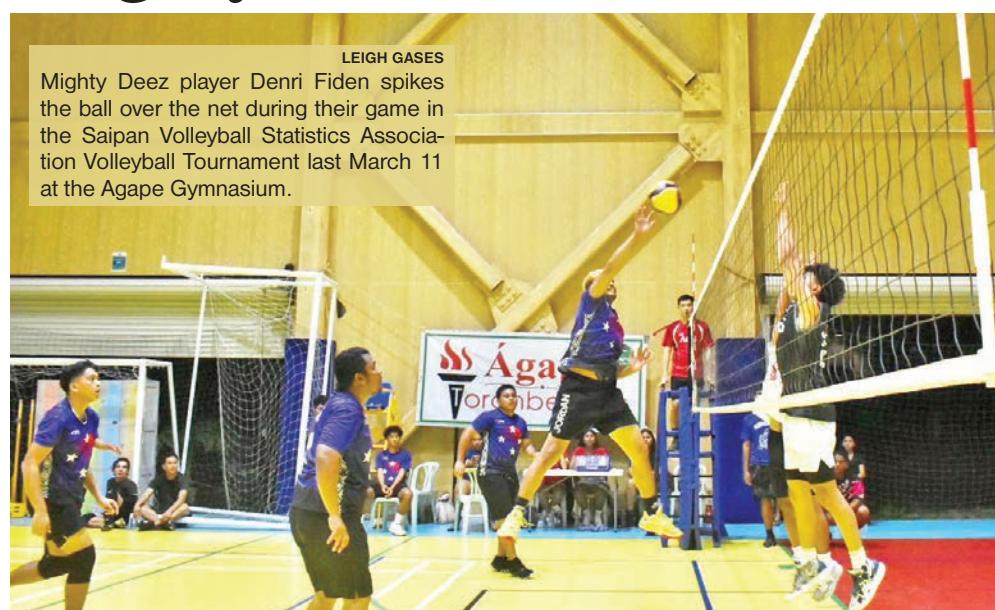


A. Kwon



D. Kwon

Mighty Deez, 4 Starz lead SVSA v-ball tourney



LEIGH GASES

Mighty Deez player Denri Fiden spikes the ball over the net during their game in the Saipan Volleyball Statistics Association Volleyball Tournament last March 11 at the Agape Gymnasium.

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Team Mighty Deez and 4 Starz currently lead the Saipan Volleyball Statistics Association Spring Volleyball Tournament.

The tournament, held at the Agape Gymnasium, began last March 4 and is played every Saturday of March, with the championship rounds this Saturday, March 25 from 10am to 6pm.

As of March 18, Mighty

Deez of Pool A has had an almost immaculate run with seven wins and one loss, while 4 Starz of Pool B have five wins and two losses.

Mighty Deez, consisting of Jerome Manzon, William Arriola, Lowell Lummug, John Justo, Raiki Tababa, Dylan Mister, and Mokyang Kim, swept their competition last Saturday, beating Chura 25-20 and outpacing 10 Bugs in a close 25-21 game.



In Pool B after 4 Starz is Agape + with four wins and three losses; third is team Lil' Big from the island of Tinian with a 2-2 record; team

Awesome with a 4-3 card; and Aceholes with a 1-6 record.

According to SVSA board president Jerome Manzon, Lil' Big of Tinian is given a special

accommodation of being the third seed in their pool no matter their win/loss record. They are an out-of-island team so the SVSA board accommodated them as the Tinian Volleyball Association also accom-

See MIGHTY on **Page 26**

Castro tops Seniors Flight

Today it all clicked," he said. His best holes of the tournament were understandably the two holes he birdied on Sunday, while the most problematic ones were essen-



MARK RABAGO

Guam's Michael Castro, third from left, topped the Senior Flight of the 2023 NMC Open Golf Tournament last weekend at the Lao Lao Bay Golf & Resort.

Michaels Castro made the most of his weekend getaway to Saipan after the Guam golfer topped the Seniors Flight of the 2023 NMC Open Golf Tournament last weekend at the Lao Lao Bay Golf & Resort.

The 56-year-old Guam

AutoSpot salesman shot a

two-round total of 152 after

firing a 79 on Day 1 and im-

proving to a 72 on Day 2.

Castro, who always enjoys coming down to Saipan,

had to come back from be-

ing five strokes down to take

the 2023 diadem.

"I played well and it was a good day. It was all fun. Always worth it coming over here. My putting, chipping, and driving are working today (Sunday) after not so much yesterday (Saturday).